

Richards 15. B)

k

10151. c. 10.

LETTERS

FROM

SICILY.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1798,

BY A GENTLEMAN

TO HIS FRIENDS

IN

ENGLAND.

London:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

BY W. STRATFORD, AND R. YOUNG,

CROWN-COURT, TEMPLE-BAR.

1800.

LETTERS

FROM

SICILY.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1798.



ENGLAND.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

BY W. BARNARD, 25, ST. MARK'S LANE.

1810.

TO

Dr. CLARKE.

DEAR SIR,

AMONGST the number of my friends who have solicited the publication of the following Letters, there is no one to whom I could address myself with more propriety than to you, who have so kindly assisted in bringing them to the press.

Permit me then to dedicate them to you, and at the same time to make use of your name as a sanction to this undertaking.

The event of the disastrous Revolution, which at the close of the year 1798, compelled the Royal Family of Naples to seek refuge in Sicily, has rendered that island a more general subject of enquiry, and excited a strong desire to become acquainted with the present state of it: it is owing to this particular circumstance, that I feel more inclined to comply with the request of my friends, hoping that

they will find somewhat to satisfy their curiosity.

Truth, in writings of this nature, is undoubtedly the main object. If the veracity of the Author be once doubted, he might as well have written his work in his study, without encountering the difficulties of travelling. All his descriptions sink to a level with mere works of fancy, and the interesting story of hardships which he has suffered, is only regarded as a fabulous narrative to connect his tale. You will find, I trust, dear Sir, that I have never lost sight of this ob-

ject. I have always borne in mind the observation of Voltaire, that "*rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable,*" I therefore flatter myself that some of my readers will derive information from the contents of this Volume: at least I may presume to hope, that the critic will not find any sentiments, which are likely to prove injurious to the minds, or to contaminate the morals of those who may read them.

The pleasures of travelling, it is generally acknowledged, are various, but there is not one amongst

them more satisfactory, than that of communicating to those who are interested for our welfare, the scenes which we have witnessed in distant countries, and the dangers to which we may have been exposed when separated from them by seas and mountains. I have at present an opportunity of gratifying this propensity, and as a tribute of my esteem, I beg that you, and the rest of my friends, will accept of the following pages, in printing which I have no other aim in view, than that of affording you and them some entertainment.

Wishing you an uninterrupted
enjoyment of health and happiness
through life,

I remain, with constant regard,

Dear Sir,

Your much obliged

Friend and Servant,

THOMAS BINGHAM RICHARDS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IF the readers of these Letters should be desirous of acquiring some knowledge of the History of Sicily, the writer begs leave to refer them to the third Volume of Swinburne's Travels, where it is so accurately detailed, as to render it superfluous to add any thing farther upon that subject. For the same reason, he has judged it needless to prefix any map of the island, as there are already many extant in different geographical works.

ADVERTISEMENT.

If the readers of these Letters should be desirous of acquiring some knowledge of the History of Sicily, the writer begs leave to refer them to the third Volume of Gibbon's History, where it is so minutely detailed, as to render it superfluous to add any thing further upon that subject. In the same manner, he has pointed it out to those who wish to know the history of the island, as there are already many extant in different languages.

Edinburgh.

CONTENTS.

LETTER I.

*REFLECTIONS upon undertaking the Tour
of Sicily—Grand Scenery in the Bay of
Naples—Island of Capri. - page 1*

LETTER II.

*Arrival at Messina—Stromboli—Isles of Lipari
—Eruption of Fire—Curious argument—Fine
Prospect upon entering the Faro—Port of
Messina—Zancla—Palaces on the Quay de-
stroyed by the Earthquakes—An interesting
Note—Style of Building—Population—Sub-
urbs—Distress of 1783—Commerce - 8*

LETTER III.

*Enchanting Prospect from the Hill near the
Convent of St. Francis—Singular Förm of
the Mountains of Calabria—Opera House—
A striking Contrast—Postscript. - 20*

LETTER IV.

*Arrival at Catania—Difficulties of Travelling—
 Reflections upon the Postscript of the preced-
 ing Letter—Effect of Day-Light upon the
 Spirits — Mules — Campieri — Road out of
 Messina—Fiume di Nisi—Situation of the
 Cities and Villages—Cape and Castle of Ales-
 sio—Road over the Mountains of Taormina.
 Reflections—Inn at Giardini—View of Etna
 at Sun-rise—Road at the Foot of the Vol-
 cano—Lava—River of Fire which destroyed
 Catania in 1669. - - page 27*

LETTER V.

*Situation of Catania, and Style of Building—
 Convent of Benedictines—Museum—Compa-
 rison between Vesuvius and Etna - 42*

LETTER VI.

*Ascent of the Mountain—Cultivated Region—
 Monte Rosso and Monspeliere—Convent of
 St. Nicolo'—Monk—Supper—Ride by Moon-
 light—Woody Region—Wild Boars — Desert*

CONTENTS.

xi

*Region — Spino d'Asino — Plain of Elaus —
New Crater — Ideas upon the Nature of the
Summit of Etna — Torrent of boiling Water —
Sun-rise — Valley of Calanna — Reflections —
Great Crater — Philosopher's Tower — Grotta
de' Capri — Scenery in the woody Region. p. 48*

LETTER VII.

*Syracuse — Journey from Catania — Lentini —
Hercules — River Alcantara — Nature of the
Country — A Disappointment — Miserable Cot-
tage — View of Syracuse — Fortifications —
Sirocco. - - - 73*

LETTER VIII.

*Reflections — Degeneration of Sicily — Descrip-
tion of the present Syracuse — Public Build-
ings — Sudden Change when the English Fleet
lay at Anchor in the Port — Ancient Syracuse —
Ortygia — Neapoli — Sepulchres and Lacrima-
toriæ — Latomie — Ear of Dionysius — Temple
of Minerva — Fountain of Arethusa — Old
Castle. - - - 81*

LETTER IX.

Sepulchres of Tycha—Situation of that Division of ancient Syracuse—Castle of Sablo, or Epi- polis—Walls of the City—Euriolus—Singular Ideas of the Peasants respecting Necromancy— Anniversary of the Dead—Visit to the Vaults of the Convent of Capuchins in antient Acra- dina—Reflections—Latomie. - page 94

LETTER X.

Rivers Anapus and Ciane—Papyrus—Method used by the Romans to make Paper—Vestiges of a magnificent Temple of Jupiter Olympus— Dreadful Thunderstorm—Quakers. 104

LETTER XI.

Catacombs. - - - 111

LETTER XII.

Return to Catania—Ruin adjoining the Road— Miserable Inn—Lightning—Museum of the Prince of Biscari—Celebrated Organ—Mu- seum of Chevalier Giueni—Reflections—Anti- quities. - - - 114

LETTER XIII.

Return to Giardini—Face of the Country—Enchanting Scenery—Village of la Zafferana, and Course of the Lava of 1790—Superstitious Faith in the Virtue of the Veil of St. Agatha—Castagno de' cento cavalli—Fair at Mascali—Reflections—Inconvenience arising at Giardini from the Inn being filled with Travellers—Priest—Fine Painter—Antiquities of Taormina—Governor—Theatre—Grand Situation—View from it—Naumachia—Reservoirs p. 124

LETTER XIV.

Return to Messina—Ancient Mines near Nisi—Style of Cultivation and Appearance of the Country round Messina—Charibdis—Ideas upon that Phenomenon - - 136

LETTER XV.

Arrival at Palermo—Sparonaro—Coast to Cape Orlando—Storm—Shipwreck—Exertions of the Women to assist the unfortunate Mariners in saving their Cargo—Dreadful Night—Culti-

vation of the Country—Castel dell' Anno—Chapel and Priest—Holy Cotton—Treasures and Vests—Something omitted—Coast from Cape Orlando—Termini celebrated for Grapes—Cape Reale—Landing at Palermo—Inn and Hostess—Prison. - - page 144

LETTER XVI.

Description of Palermo—Situation—Outline of the City—Style of Building—Bustle—Carriages—Population—Number of Nobility, and Reason why they all flock to Palermo—Water—Snow—Reflections—Corrupt Manners—Observance of the Sabbath—Opera House—Day converted into Night, and vice versa—Enchanting Road to Monreale—Fine Prospect—Cathedral and Situation of that City 159

LETTER XVII.

Marino—Incitations to Love—Cupid—Suburbs of Palermo—Port—Spanish Men of War—Drive to the Bagaria—Description of that Spot—Palaces—Church of St. Flavia—Female Sex—Early Marriages. - 175

LETTER XVIII.

Rupture of the Treaty between France and Naples—Impending Revolution—Singular Effect of Jealousy illustrated by a Story—Consul General—Rejoicings for the Birth of a Princess—Police. - - - 186

LETTER XIX.

The Viceroy's Procession to one of the Churches—Te Deum—Number of Churches in Palermo—St. Joseph's—Unfinished State of the Buildings in Italy and Sicily—Duke and Duchess of F.—Palace of Tisa—Viceroy's Chapel—Preparations for returning to Naples. 198

LETTER XVIII.

History of the Treaty between France and the
the—Institution—Institution—Institution—Institution
of the Treaty between France and the
General—Institution—Institution—Institution
133

LETTER XIX.

The Treaty between France and the
The Treaty between France and the
St. Joseph—Institution—Institution—Institution
in Italy and Sicily—Institution—Institution
The Treaty between France and the
133

LETTERS

FROM

SICILY.

LETTER I.

October 18, 1798.

I WRITE the present Letter on board a Trabacolo, a small merchant vessel, in which I embarked this morning, to put in execution a plan which has been long uppermost in my imagination; and the cheering solace of the lonesome hours that I have passed since January last, when the revolution in Switzerland obliged me to cross the Frigid Alps, and

seek refuge amongst the Appennines in Tuscany. I allude to that of visiting the island of Sicily, and of inspecting the natural curiosities and interesting vestiges of ancient splendour with which it abounds.

Although I have met with innumerable objects of admiration in Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, and Italy, which I have enjoyed during the last three years, still do I embark upon the present tour with an ardour for novelty, equal to what I felt upon first leaving my native soil, and my expectations are raised to a very high pitch. Yet I flatter myself, from what I have been able to collect from the descriptions of other travellers, and from the testimony of many of my Italian friends who have made the tour of Sicily, that my hopes will not be disappointed; and as the present crisis does not admit of my attending closely to commerce, I know not in what manner I could employ a few weeks more satisfactorily.

A favorable breeze carried us six leagues from the Mole at Naples, and then dying away, left us becalmed between the island of Capri, and the most western cape of the Bay of Naples, where we may expect to continue till sun-set, when a breeze generally springs up in this climate. It would be totally impossible for my weak pen to paint to your imagination the view which presents itself from the vessel. I will attempt to describe it to you; your own ideas must enliven the scene. Imagine yourselves opposite the center of a vast amphitheatre, replete with the most interesting objects, which can be produced by nature and art; beginning from the west, you see several little islands breaking the azure line of the far distant horizon like clouds, and next that of Ischia, a high mountain, which emerges from the surface of the sea; and a little to the right a chain of cloud topt appennines lose themselves in distance. The objects which present themselves gradually as you

turn towards the East, are the Cape of Misenum, where the fleet of Pliny lay at anchor during the violent eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which overwhelmed Pompeia with hot ashes; the gulphs of Baja and Puzzuoli; the Monte Nuovo, which was forced up in one night from a level surface on the borders of the Lucrine Lake; Mount Falerno, renowned by Horace for its wine; Procida, a lofty island crowned with a town of the same name; Nisida, a bold rock; and the cape and mountain of Pesilippo, garnished with palaces, convents, and villages. By the time you have surveyed these interesting objects, your eye arrives at the center of the enchanting amphitheatre, where the noble city of Naples rises majestically from the shore, presenting a pleasing mixture of churches, fortresses, and palaces, towering one above the other. Here your attention is fixed by the variety, and your soul enraptured by the grandeur of the scene. Gradually verging toward the right you

overlook the spacious and fertile plain called Terra di Lavoro, bounded by a sterile ridge of the Appennines near Caserta and Mount Vesuvius. It resembles a large garden interspersed with villages and elegant villas, and the grand volcano with its immense crater, and rivers of black lava, forms a picturesque contrast with the cultivated vale below. Adjoining it are those bold mountains covered with forests, dressed in the richest tints of autumn, which inclose the Bay of Naples on the south side, and rise majestically behind the cities of Castelammare and Sorrento, and run out to cape Campanelle, very near the spot where we now lie. To form an adequate idea of this scene, you must add the clear azure of an Italian sky, and the soft tint of the watery foreground, and then can you imagine that a happier combination of picturesque subjects is to be met with in any other country on earth? Can you figure to yourselves any scene more inviting, more pleasing, or more enchanting?

But it would have still greater charms for me, if you could participate in the delights of it.

Capri is an island of a very singular form, which has apparently been separated from the main land by some violent convulsion, or forced above the surface of the sea by a subterraneous power. It is about ten miles in circumference, and celebrated for its wine, and the ruins of twelve villas of Tiberius and Augustus Cæsar, who both spent some years of their lives there in every kind of licentiousness. At present it contains a small city, inhabited by a colony of about three thousand fishermen and their families².

21st. 12 o'Clock.

The light breezes of the evenings have been generally unpropitious to our sailing, therefore we have scarce run thirty knots since the 18th. The infallible travelling companions and constant inhabitants of a

foreign vessel, viz. rats, mice, bugs, fleas, and flies, have annoyed me so incessantly, as to disturb my sleep, and render me very little disposed to do any thing which requires the exertion of my patience for a few minutes only; luckily I have nothing particular to impart to you. We have the gulph of Policastro opposite our larboard beam, and are in sight of some of the isles of Lipari. The coast from cape Campanelle fouthward, is bold and very high; but we have been so far distant from it, that I could not take any sketches.

LETTER II.

Messina, 22d. October.

THANK God, I am now safe arrived at Messina, after a tedious and fatiguing voyage! We scudded along upon a wind all yesterday afternoon and the following night. At eight o'clock in the evening we were within three leagues of Stromboli: the weather was so very hazy that I caught only an imperfect glimpse of that volcano. It is an isle which in several points of view appears a perfect cone, nearly of the same size and height as Vesuvius. The crater is on the north side, and about two thirds of the whole height from its base. It emits a dense column of white smoak, and has no intervals of tranquillity, as is the case with Vesuvius. Flames issue so frequently from its crater, that it serves the purpose of a light house to vessels at sea, and under this denomination we find it recorded by several ancient writers. The

isles of Lipari are ten in number, and to judge from the singularity of their form, most of them appear to have been forced up above the surface of the sea, and raged with fury as volcanoes for several ages. To this fact various ancient writers bear testimony. Stromboli is at present the only burning crater, although the other isles contain springs of hot water, and produce a great quantity of pumice stone, sulphur, and other volcanic matter: Homer, Virgil, and several ancient poets and historians called them the Eolian islands, from Eolus, the god of winds, who was supposed to reside amongst them; and according to Strabo, Stromboli was the place of his residence. I remember to have met with many passages concerning them, particularly in Virgil, who informs us, that when any of the gods or goddesses wished to raise a storm, or command any particular wind to the prejudice or favor of the mortals on earth, they descended to Eolus, fixed a bargain with him, and were furnished accordingly from a bag, in which

those winds were kept which they desired to have. I cannot conceive from what this allegory originated, nor does the reason commonly assigned for it, appear sufficiently plausible. It is generally said, that it arose from the Eolus, who was of the race of the Heraclides, and came with a colony to these islands, at the time of the Trojan war. By marrying the daughter of Liparus, son of Ausonius, king of Italy, he became king of the island, which he called after his own name, and having learned how to foretel the changes of the wind and weather, by the smoke which was emitted from the volcanoes, he was often consulted upon this subject by mariners, passing from Italy to Sicily, and was held as a god in distant countries. Homer and Virgil took advantage of this story, and dressed it in lively colours. Still this tale appears too insignificant to form the foundation of a belief in the god of winds, which existed for so many ages in the heathen religion. Be that as it may,

Eolus has now lost his empire, and the sea is as calm around the isles of Lipari, as elsewhere in the Mediterranean. The cool air of the evening drove me into the cabin soon after sunset, and having a bad head-ach my servant was induced to leave me undisturbed, while Stromboli emitted flames to the height of several hundred feet.

I felt a little chagrined at losing so fine an opportunity of seeing this eruption, which was a very grand spectacle to those who were upon deck. The violence of my head-ach banished sleep from my eyes, but in the midst of my suffering, I was entertained by a long metaphysical dispute upon education and morals, between a Catanese apprentice, and a Spanish body guard, who both lay stretched upon a matrass beneath me. The former left no scheme untried to bring his opponent to confess, that a liberal education, where the excellencies and vices of the world are exposed in

their true light, is best calculated to render a man or woman happy in their own mind, and a blessing to society; and the latter used every argument in defence of the most rigorous monastical discipline, where the theory only is taught of what mankind ought to be, and where no regard is paid to the real actions of man. The reason which the Catanese assigned for condemning this method, was, because a person so educated, was rendered unwilling to resist the temptations of this world, from having never been properly made acquainted with the evils which may accrue from giving way to them. The Spaniard on his side persisted in maintaining, that the virtues of mankind alone should be impressed on the minds of youth, and no mention whatsoever be made of the vices of the world; and he frequently repeated that it is better to be ignorant than to know too much: sufficient was said upon this topic to fill a volume. Towards day-break my philosophers began to argue with less

energy, their words were gradually pronounced in a fainter tone of voice, a little nonsense succeeded, and all points in dispute were settled in sleep. When I emerged from the nest of vermin, which is a title well adapted to the cabin, I was agreeably surprized at finding myself at the entrance into the Faro of Messina, where the picturesque and lofty mountains of Calabria form a striking contrast with the *Collines riantes* of Sicily. Soon after doubling the Cape on which the light-house is situated, where the passage is not more than a mile in breadth, I discovered the city of Messina under high mountains, whose craggy summits were richly gilded by the warm glow of the rising sun. A number of ships under full sail, together with several other delightful objects, contributed to render the scene as enchanting as any I ever beheld. The celebrated Scylla and Charibdis were pointed out to me by the pilot of our vessel; but I will defer treating of them for the present, that I may here

after give you more details respecting them than I am able to do in this letter. The port of Messina is spacious and very safe; it is formed by a neck of land projecting into the Faro in the shape of a sickle, leaving an entrance about three hundred yards wide. From this circumstance the city was called Zancle, according to Thucydides, who informs us, that the sickle of Saturn fell upon that spot; as Sicily is very productive of wheat this is rather a happy idea. Diodorus Siculus says, that it took its original name from Zanclocto, a king of the island in the days of the famous giant Orion, who was placed amongst the gods, and from whom the heavenly constellation takes its name. Zancle was destroyed, according to Pausanias, in the XXIXth. Olympiad, and Messina was built upon its ruins, named after a town in the Peloponesus. The beautiful crescent of marble palaces along the quay, which Brydone describes with great accuracy and elegance, is now a mere heap of

ruins, having been entirely destroyed by the dreadful earthquakes of 1783, which razed many cities to the ground, split the mountains asunder, and divided immense masses of rock. The sight of these dreary objects of the devastation committed by the most awful phenomenon in nature, has a strong effect upon my feelings, and recalls to my mind, the scenes of distress and horror which I witnessed in May last at Sienna, when the earth was in a state of agitation during the space of three days; and the finest buildings were ruined by the violent shocks of earthquakes^b. The houses in the modern parts of the town are built entirely of stone, generally two or three stories high, with small iron balconies at each window, and many of the streets running in direct lines; the effect of the whole is very pleasing, and struck me at the moment as being very like part of the suburbs of Vienna. If I may be allowed to draw a conclusion from the general bustle and stir in the streets, I should imagine

Messina to be very populous in proportion to its size, and may venture to assert, that it contains upwards of thirty thousand inhabitants. The inns are wretched, and the one I am in is little better than a hovel, but any thing upon terra firma is acceptable after a tedious voyage.

A person who lands at Messina after a direct voyage from Naples, must be amazingly struck with the style of building, from the contrast which its low houses form with the lofty mansions of that capital. The iron balconies at first sight would give the appearance of a prison, but the ground floor of every house being converted into shops, that idea is lost in the gaiety and bustle of the scene. In the squares of the city are some fine fountains, particularly one near the cathedral, which though not of ancient date, exhibits some proofs of skill and taste in regard to the sculpture. The habitations in the suburbs consist only of two stories, and many of

them since the earthquake are mere planks of wood, fastened together in the shape of a hut, which have a most miserable appearance. How different was the state of Messina when Brydone and Swinburne visited it before that dreadful convulsion, and what an unfortunate change has taken place since that period ! The horrid catastrophe of 1783 is the subject of a tale of woe in the mouth of every inhabitant, which it is distressing to hear ; and I was astonished when they related the imminent dangers which they had escaped, and that many had lain buried under the ruins of their houses, and the manner in which they extricated themselves from that terrible situation. Were they not well aware of the numerous advantages which must accrue from the situation of their port, and of the great commerce, which from that circumstance must naturally be carried on with every European nation, they would never have returned to dwell in their tottering habitations ; but all ideas of

personal safety seem to yield to those of lucre. Considering the present unfavorable crisis of commercial affairs in general, and particularly of those of the Mediterranean, I am rather surprized at finding a great number of Neapolitan, Imperial, and Genoese vessels now at anchor in the quay. Sicily in itself can consume very little of the produce of foreign countries, therefore these ships generally come in ballast to receive cargoes of wheat, silks, oil, drugs, brimstone, and fruit, which the island produces abundantly in the greatest perfection; it is consequently advantageous to the Italian merchants, who make consignments of these goods to the northern ports of Europe, to buy them at Messina, where in default of home consumption, and on account of the copious harvests yielded by the unparalleled fertility of the soil, they are purchased at lower prices than at Leghorn, or Naples. The country to the west of this city is very hilly and highly cultivated, producing the prickly and spiral

aloes, olives, lemons, oranges, grapes, and figs in abundance. The villages, convents, and country houses, are so delightfully situated, as to correspond with the most romantic ideas of picturesque beauty. I have often wished that I could transport you hither to partake of the natural delights of this country, but I must content myself with the hopes, that my letters may afford you a temporary amusement, and you may depend upon my utmost endeavours to represent every thing worthy attention, in the truest light, without allowing myself those liberties, which are I fear, with too much justice, sometimes imputed to travellers, of depreciating or exaggerating, as best suits their humour.

I remain, &c.

LETTER III.

Messina, 23d. October.

THE lively description which Brydone gives of the view from the hill, a little to the north of the city, where the anniversary of St. Francis is celebrated, induced me to rise early this morning, and walk thither to enjoy the scene, when the natural beauty of every object was heightened by the glowing rays of the rising sun. I do not remember ever to have been more enraptured with nature, than upon attaining the summit of the hill; the city and its suburbs occupied the foreground, the Faro resembled the mouth of a majestic river, rolling its limpid waves in silent dignity through two chains of mountains, and emptying itself into the ocean; the high coast of Calabria dressed in the richest and most harmonious tints of autumn, enlivened by the glow which filled the whole atmosphere, enchanted me with a pleasing

union of variety and grandeur, but I shuddered with horror, when I reflected upon the dreadful calamities to which this delightful country is subject, and blessed Heaven that my own native island is free from them.

The outlines of the mountains of Calabria, which are for the most part horizontal, and rise gradually above one another, from Tropea southwards, form a singular contrast with the conic topt Alps, whose summits pierce the clouds, while the former seem pressed down by them. This circumstance merits the nearer attention of naturalists, as it strikes me, that from the very irregular shape of the Alps, they were forced up in unwieldy masses by a subterraneous power (most likely that of fire and confined vapours) while on the contrary, the mountains of Calabria were formed at a later period by sediment. The Volcanists and Neptunists (as they have been termed) have each a powerful argu-

ment in their favor, and you will clearly see, that an union of both systems would form the most reasonable theory of the earth^c.

After contemplating for some hours the grandeur of the prospect from the hill, I returned into the city to deliver a letter of introduction to Mons. De C—, the Dutch Consul, who received me with every mark of politeness. He inhabited one of the beautiful houses upon the quay at the time of the great earthquakes, and from having witnessed that horrid scene through all its stages, he gave me an interesting detail of the dangerous situation of himself and several neighbours, from which they escaped almost miraculously. He likewise gave me some preparatory instructions in regard to the tour which I am going to undertake in the island, and to my great satisfaction assured me, that I need not harbour any fears on account of the banditti, who never injure the person of a defenceless traveller.

The objects of curiosity which might detain me here not being very numerous, I shall proceed towards Mount Etna without delay, as the air grows colder every day, and the trees begin to cast their tinted foliage.

I have been to the Opera House this evening, which I readily left to converse with you, a far more agreeable employment, than sitting upon thorns to hear bad singing, and see worse acting. The house is neat, but of an exceedingly bad form, being that of a parallelogram with round ends; it is very small, containing only sixty boxes; these were pretty well filled with Neapolitan and Portuguese naval officers, belonging to some ships of war, which have lately put into this port from the blockade of Malta.

I have observed fewer idle people in the streets of Messina than at Naples, and the lower class seem more industrious and bet-

ter clad than the Neapolitans. This may in part be accounted for, by the commerce being greater in proportion to the number of inhabitants than at Naples, the climate being less relaxing, owing to the continual current of air through the Faro, and from luxury and vice not being carried to so high a pitch as in most parts of Italy. The women are in general very plain at Messina, the only exceptions are some few of the higher ranks of society, but these are mostly Italians or Palermitans: those of the lower class dress much neater than in many parts of the Continent, and do not shew that desire for tawdry colours, which prevails in all Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. Nature has bestowed her two chief gifts upon this island, viz. a fine climate, and a light soil: the rarest of her productions spring up spontaneously, and grow almost uninvited to the highest state of perfection; the natives want more cultivation than the country they live in, and it is distressing, but equally true, that human

beings dwindle here, whilst every thing around them flourishes. What a contrast is this to the island which you inhabit; where, though the sun is frequently concealed from your sight, and piercing winds often blast the hopes of the labourers, still Britons rise triumphant over other nations to whom nature has been lavish of her choicest blessings, and their laudable industry and steady perseverance procure them those luxuries, comforts, and necessities of life which no other nation on earth can boast of.

I shall next address you from Catania; do not be alarmed if my letters should not reach you very regularly, as they may be detained here, and at Reggio and Rome, waiting for the northern posts which fetch them.

P. S. As I was preparing to seal the preceding letter, I was considerably alarmed at the shock of an earthquake, which lasted

about fifteen seconds with an undulate motion; it has totally unhinged me, and for a time deprived me of all recollection of myself. The moon shines through opaque clouds, and the air is oppressive. I have observed nothing like electric fluid, and perhaps there may be good reason to doubt the doctrine of the connection between the atmosphere and the bowels of the earth at the time of an earthquake. I hope to get off in the morning; the night will appear long, and anxiety will make every moment tedious; although the people, who are assembled in the streets, assure me that I need not dread a second shock, as the first is generally the most severe^d: in my present situation, surrounded by so many ruined piles, the effect of a similar event which took place but a few years ago, this argument, though founded without doubt upon experience, affords but little comfort to my agitated mind.

LETTER IV.

Catania, 26th October.

I ARRIVED here this evening, after a very fatiguing journey from Messina; for, although the whole distance is only fifty miles, and I have not travelled more than half that number each day, yet the roads were so abominable, the heat so oppressive, the accommodations so miserable, and the pace of the mules so hard and uncomfortable, that I am not only stiff in every joint, but feel myself bruised from head to foot. In the Postscript of my last letter from Messina, I stated how much I was alarmed, not without reason, at the shock of an earthquake, rather more severe than any that has been felt since that of 1783. The dreadful scenes around me, the imminent danger I had lately escaped at Sienna, the distress which I was witness to when that unfortunate city was nearly razed to the ground, and the great

expanse of land and water between my dearest and best friends and myself, accumulated themselves with all their horrors and wild phantasies, to increase the perturbation of my mind. I was alone in my miserable chamber, a small lamp burnt dimly in one corner of it, and the moon shone at intervals through the apertures of a ragged curtain. I fancied that I saw the earth opening its ravenous jaws, and emitting all consuming flames and masses of fire. I started at my own shadow, reflected upon the wall by the faint glimmering of the lamp; every footstep, every sound appeared to me the harbinger of a dreadful shock. My heated imagination exceeded all bounds, I sprang from my chair and awakened my servant, who lay stretched upon a matress in the anti-chamber, forgetting all his cares in sleep. My wild looks alarmed him—What's the matter, what has happened? Did you not feel the whole house rocking about, and can you ask what is the matter with so much

indifference ! He replied only by a smile, and again closed his eyes. Towards morning I enveloped myself in my travelling coat, and dozed for a few hours, waking frequently, strongly impressed with the idea that the earth was in motion. At sun rise I got up, a little refreshed in body, and more tranquil in mind. Day-light had a wonderful effect upon my spirits, and soon raised them from that depressed state into which they had been thrown by a combination of unpleasant circumstances. I observed every one return briskly to his daily labour, and the course of business and pleasure did not seem in the least interrupted. By eight o'clock my fears were so entirely dissipated, that I resolved to accomplish my former plan of staying at Messina till the following morning. I repeated my visit to the hill near the convent of St. Francis, and walked about the city and its environs most of the day. It would be tiresome to describe to you every trivial object which may arrest my attention for a few minutes,

in a country so far distant from you, and where there are so great a number of subjects to be met with more worthy of notice. I will therefore leave Messina for the present.

I set off for Catania early on the morning of the 25th, in company with my trusty servant, my faithful dog, and a mule driver, without whom these stubborn animals will frequently fall down on the road, and unless you make use of cruel means, it is impossible to re-mount them, and to proceed on your journey. The driver, with whose voice they are well acquainted, calls out to them incessantly, accompanying his shouts with blows and goads to keep them constantly awake to their duty, and drive off stubborn fits. I would generally advise travellers to take a guard, or campiere with them, which will infallibly protect them from the assaults of bandittis, as their red uniform is always respected, and it is believed by many, that the generality of them

have some connection with those armies of plunderers. These campieri may be hired in any city: they ride before you with a long gun across the pommel of their saddle, and are as despotic in the little inns on the road, as any bashaw of the east. Immediately upon arrival at the place where you mean to lodge or dine, they ask for your orders, and see them punctually obeyed, preventing any kind of imposition, which Sicilians will generally practise upon travellers, whenever they have an opportunity of so doing.

For near three miles out of Messina I rode through a chain of villages, running parallel with the Faro, and about half a mile distant from it; this intermediate space is laid out in gardens and groves, of myrtle, orange, lemon, fig, and olive trees, and cultivated chiefly by nature in the most luxuriant style. On my right hand the hills rose in gradual ascent till they became lofty mountains, and appeared as bold com-

petitors to those on the opposite coast of Calabria. They form part of a chain of mountains anciently called the Hebrodes, which are spoken of by several authors. Upon leaving the villages the road continues along the beach, the mountains approach nearer to the sea, and exhibit overhanging precipices of steril rock, which are in some parts picturesquely formed, and harmoniously tinted. We baited at a small village on the banks of the river Nisis, a mere torrent, called by the Greeks Chrysothoas, from their finding gold mixed with its sands. I was told that ruins of ancient gold and silver mines are to be seen amongst the mountains near its source, about four miles from the village. We joined some travellers, who had had the precaution to bring a campiere from Messina, which I thought would be a comfortable security after sun-set. The soil is very fertile, producing almost spontaneously every species of vegetables, but the country is mi-

serably cultivated, the effect probably of an oppressive government, and a want of proper encouragement. I observed several small cities and villages, situated upon the summits of the mountains, to enjoy the cooler atmosphere, and according to the opinion of some authors, to be above the reach of plundering invaders, which is certainly a very weighty argument. Amongst these the little city of Fozza, and the village of Saouca, cannot fail to attract the notice of a traveller. The former crowns a high rock of a perfectly conical shape, environed by mountains, and the latter runs along the ridge of a promontory, declining gradually on both sides from the church, which is in the center. After ascending a high hill near this village, I was struck with the fine ruins of the Castle of St. Alessio, upon a cape of that name, formerly called Argenum. They are in the Gothic style, and probably formed an extensive fortress and palace, nine centuries ago, when the Nor-

mans subdued and governed Sicily. Upon leaving this venerable vestige of fallen greatness, the high mountains of Taormina, or Taurominum, according to Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and others, presented themselves to my view; and after descending about a mile, the road again continued along the beach. Several half ruined watch towers, inhabited only by wood pigeons. and mantled with vines, recall to your mind the times of the barbarians, and are convincing proofs of the consequence of this island in the scale of Europe before more distant shores, and a new world supplied this quarter of the globe with the productions, which were, till then, fetched chiefly from Sicily.

Leaving the beach the road ascends, steep and craggy, up the mountains of Taormina; the scenery becomes confined and highly romantic. A narrow path winds along the side of a frightful precipice, which is overhung by immense rocks

and masses of volcanic emanations, in a manner as terrific as any thing I ever beheld of the same nature, either amongst the Alps, or in Switzerland. When I had attained the highest point of the mountains, I was much disappointed at finding the summit of the majestic Etna involved in dark clouds, but its base portended something far exceeding my ideas. Full of the most ardent desire to see this volcano unveiled, I rode pensive down the long hill to Giardini.

Evening had spread a shade of sombre grey over the scene, and the objects of nature lost their lively colours and fascinating forms. The high rocks before me exhibited chaos of rude masses; the distant bells of a convent of Dominican Friars, situated on a towering height, called the monks to vespers. My ideas floated upon various subjects. The tinkling of the vesper bells recalled to my mind the horrid massacre committed in cold blood, upon thousands

of the most enlightened men of the thirteenth century. At this fatal signal the injured inhabitants of Sicily murdered every Frenchman and his family, not sparing even their infants, and extirpated the race of their conquerors, who had rendered themselves obnoxious to their hatred by their dissolute manners, which are too often the companions of refinement. I next looked towards the gigantic Etna, from whose flank I fancied I beheld torrents of flaming matter, issuing with fury, overwhelming the wretched villages, and laying waste the neighbouring country. Methought I saw the lofty crater vomiting columns of fire and smoke, and heard the loud peals of thunder from its bowels. My imagination turned to more domestic scenes; I reflected upon my dear friends, separated from me by seas, countries, and mountains; I cast a sigh, when I ran over the vast expanse between us. The rocks impending frightfully over my head, seemed to exclude me from all intercourse with

the rest of Europe. Lost in this train of ideas, I gave the reins to my mule, who carried me safely to the inn at Giardini, where I was roused from my reverie by the appearance of the inn-keeper's daughter, a beautiful girl, of the perfect Grecian stature and features, who came to the door to dispose of the little luggage I had with me. I was conducted into a spacious apartment, the only room in the inn; it therefore answers the purpose of parlour and bed-room, for travellers of both sexes and their servants. Supper was served up in vases, formed like those which were in use amongst the ancient Greeks, and my little waiting maid, with her light blue corset, and hair tied up with a bunch of ribbons, made me almost imagine, that Grecian manners and customs were returned to Sicily from Elysium, or that I was in a family which had preserved them for ages, pure, and without any alteration. The village is extensive, but dirty and miserable, and seems only half inhabited. I left it by

moon-light this morning, and at sun-rise was struck and enchanted at the awful and picturesque view of the great volcano, crowned with snow, and emitting clouds of smoke. The warm hue caused by the rays of the sun, just peeping from the deep, added to the autumnal garment in which the mountain was clothed, rendered the scene as grand as human imagination can devise ; and the first sight of this enormous mass exceeded in every respect my most sanguine expectations. Let insignificant man behold this wondrous work of an all-powerful Creator, and adore the greatness of his might who raised it ! Well might those fathers of literature, the Greeks, call it the Mansion of Deities ! Their ideas could not expand themselves to one all-wise being, sole Creator and governor of the universe, and every thing terrestrial seemed far too mean to be compared to it. Plato, it is said, came from Greece to Syracuse, with an intention to ascend Mount Etna ; the emperor

Adrian, and in later times Cardinal Bembo accomplished it, and were astonished beyond measure at the wonders which they beheld. Think then what an effect it must have upon an Englishman, accustomed to the gentle slopes of the hills upon the surface of his native land!

The road for about fifteen miles from Giardini winds along the foot of the volcano, at some distance from the sea, and through a country laid out, with a pleasing variety, in corn fields, vineyards, and gardens, inclosed by olive, fig, aloes, lemon, almond, and other fructiferous trees. This scene suddenly wears a very different aspect from what you have enjoyed hitherto, and you proceed for the distance of three miles over an ancient stream of lava of a most dreary appearance, barely producing a few mosses and stunted trees. The country again becomes pretty to Iaci, a small city on a hill, containing nothing worthy remark. For want of other con-

venience, I was obliged to dine in the stable with the mules and their drivers, and then continued my route to Catania, ten miles farther. This part of the country is overwhelmed with many streams of lava of different ages; some of it produces a little moss, some a few bushes, and some is entirely steril, presenting a barren and uncommon aspect, though perhaps in a few centuries it will become a delightful garden, as the lava, when pulverised by time, forms a rich, black, and light soil.

Lava has not, as you may naturally suppose, a smooth surface and vitreous appearance, which is the case with the generality of fluids when they congeal from a boiling state, but it is a stony substance, of a dark grey colour, and full of pores of various sizes, between that of a pin's head and an egg. The external surface of a stream of this volcanic matter, when the heat has left it, exactly resembles ploughed land, and is covered with acute excres-

cences, or projecting parts, so that it is very difficult and dangerous to walk over it. The course of that terrible river of fire, which destroyed the city of Catania in 1669, and is in some parts six miles broad, is easily traced from its source to the sea because of its recent date, and from its being totally unproductive of every kind of vegetation. Upon entering this city, I was rather surprised at its great population, the regularity of its streets, the number of carriages upon the parade, and the elegant stile of some of its public buildings. It grows very late.

I remain, &c. &c.

LETTER V.

Catania, 27th October.

I HAVE spent the whole of the morning in strolling about this city, which lies at the foot of Mount Gibel*, upon different stratas of lava very near the sea, and in a similar situation to Portici under Mount Vesuvius, with this difference only, that from Portici to the summit of the Neapolitan volcano, the distance is only four miles, whereas it is a continual ascent of thirty miles from hence to the crater of Etna. The greater part of Catania has been built within the last seventy years, the style of architecture is consequently modern and uniform; but very few of the houses or public buildings are entirely completed. The streets run in direct lines, about a mile in length, which has a pleasing effect. The pavement is generally good; the exterior appearance of the churches and public edifices is grand and

* The common name in the country for Mount Etna.

symmetrical, and the columns are for the most part of marble. Amongst the former St. Michael's church attracts the traveller's notice for a moment; although it does not contain any internal decorations, which are not common to all other catholic churches. The convent of Benedictines, is an extensive building, containing a handsome marble staircase, newly polished and ornamented in a most elegant style with paintings and pannelling, and a spacious church, whose nave is of very superior architecture, and whose altars are adorned with large modern paintings, the work of a native of great talents, who has studied the art in Rome, and with several highly polished Corinthian columns of verde antique. There is likewise a library well stored with books, and a museum attached to this convent, replete with an indescribable variety of Grecian antiquities, volcanic emanations, fossils, and marine productions of every species, but it is much to be regretted by travellers, that the whole of these curi-

osities are placed in the greatest disorder, and kept in glass cases, rendered so very opaque from the dust which covers them, that it is utterly impossible to derive either benefit or satisfaction from the sight of the rarities they contain. While occupied in viewing this museum, the abbot of the convent, and several friars, waited upon me in a formal manner to congratulate me as a Briton, upon the late glorious and unparalleled victory of the Nile, which has placed them in a state of security, and may perhaps save them from the much dreaded jaws of French plunderers. They were not deficient in paying a variety of handsome compliments to our happy nation, and testified the greatest regard for Englishmen. This sentiment I find generally prevails throughout Sicily amongst every class of society, and it gives me infinite satisfaction to witness the high estimation in which my countrymen are held, even in these far distant realms. God grant that they may ever continue to

be beloved and cherished by other nations, and to merit the good character which they have gained in all the countries of Europe, which I have visited hitherto. From this circumstance, I consider the present moment highly favorable for my travels, as I need not be under any apprehension of being ill treated; but on the contrary, I am sure of meeting every where with a kind reception. The convent of Benedictines was entirely surrounded by the lava of 1669, and to the great astonishment of every one received no injury. Upon its surface are some pretty gardens, full of flowering shrubs and fruit trees, but particularly small orange trees not above two feet high, and which are loaden with fruit. The view of Mount Gibel from these gardens is grand and majestic beyond description: it stands before you like a vast pyramid, without even a hillock to break the regularity of its form. You must not be surprized if I take up my residence at Catania for a month, I am so deeply pe-

netrated with admiration for this great volcano, that I cannot leave it without satisfying my curiosity in every respect. The more I observe it, the more I take delight in its form, its height, and its tints. Vesuvius appears only a molehill when compared to it, and loses very much in the comparison. What an addition to a volcano is a crown of driven snow ! and what a necessary appendage is a torrent, if I may use the expression, of smoke issuing from its crater ! But on the other hand, Vesuvius has some unparalleled peculiarities ; its situation in the enchanting bay of Naples, with the vicinity of that magnificent city, renders it a more picturesque and pleasing scene than even Etna itself. The combination of scenery in the bay of Naples is so very fascinating, that it is more calculated to cause delight to the soul at first sight, or to raise the spirits, than to inspire awe and admiration, which is precisely the case in beholding the giant Etna. Vesuvius loses itself as a volcano in the attract-

ing appearance of the objects around it, whereas the character of Etna is so strongly delineated, that it corresponds with the romantic descriptions of enthusiastic writers.

As the weather is at present propitious, and promises to continue settled, I shall commence the ascent of the mountain this afternoon, and proceed as far as I am able to-night, that I may reach the summit to-morrow morning before sun-rise, and return back to Catania the same evening. You may expect a true and accurate description of every thing which may strike my fancy, though I must assure you, by way of preparation, that words are wanting to describe the state of my feelings upon viewing the scenes around me; therefore your own imagination must embellish the details, which my weak pen may furnish you with, and I shall be fully repaid for all my trouble, if I meet with success in affording you some entertainment.

I remain, &c. &c.

LETTER VI.

Catania, 29th October.

I RETURNED from Mount Etna yesterday evening, and it was my intention to write to you at that time, but I found myself so much fatigued, that I was unable to accomplish it; therefore I now take up my pen to give you an exact description of the various scenes and objects which attracted my attention.

I left this city, in company with my host, at three o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th instant. We entered immediately upon the cultivated region (*Regione coltivata* or *Piemontese*) which surrounds the whole mountain with a zone about twelve miles in breadth, and from seventy to ninety in circumference. It contains many cities and villages, amongst which Catania, Taormina, Calabitano, la Motta, Culia, Casalotta, Monspeliéro, Tricastagno, and Via-

grande, are the most considerable. These are all built upon beds of lava, emitted at various eruptions, which is easily perceived by the different state of vegetation, a criterion whereby you may form an idea of the date of each stratum. The road through this region ascends very gradually, and is either artificially or naturally paved with lava. The villages are truly miserable; their houses consist only of four walls, built of lava, a roof of red tiles, a window and a door, so that in case any future eruption should oblige the inhabitants to evacuate them, they would not suffer any material loss in consequence of their flight, and they might re-establish themselves in any other situation in a very short time, imitating the wandering Arabs, who pitch their tents in the most convenient spot, and reside there till want compels them to search fresh quarters. The country exhibits a series of rivers of lava of many ages, some of them producing every kind of fruit tree, and laid out in vineyards, gardens,

and groves of lemon trees, and others, desert and unprofitable to the present generation. I often turned round to admire the view towards Catania, which increased in beauty and extent as I ascended; the cultivated region occupied the foreground, the city and surrounding villages the middle distance, and the azure main and mountains of Syracuse were in the back ground. I passed at the foot of several hills, ancient craters and sons of Etna, forced up by an internal power at the time of a great eruption, from which I could trace rivers of lava, as it is from them, and not from the great crater, that those torrents of igneous matter issue, which lay waste the neighbouring country, and seldom stop in their destructive course till they form a promontory in the sea. These, to the number of a hundred and upwards, rise like molehills from the sides of the mountain, in the space between the cultivated and desert regions, but the former is more particularly occupied by them. The Monte Rosso, situated

near the road about twelve miles from Catania, is the most conspicuous amongst them, and from it was emitted that dreadful river of all consuming fire, which overwhelmed that city in the year 1669, and in an instant buried its churches and palaces, and thousands of its inhabitants, in a dense mass of red hot lava. The form of this hill is nearly that of a perfect cone: its sides are covered with black ashes and sand, which it emitted so copiously as to bury the village of St. Nicolo about a mile from its summit, and leave no vestiges of it. The road now passes over the sandy plain, which marks the site of this unfortunate village. Adjoining to the Monte Rosso is another extinguished crater of a similar nature, called Monspeliere, from a village of that name. Having passed the plain of Black Ashes, we arrived at the convent of St. Nicolò l'arena (St. Nicholas on the Sand) so called from its situation. This convent is small, and belongs to the Benedictines of Catania, to whom it

serves as a summer residence, and from its convenient situation it is become the general resort of travellers in this season of the year to get a night's lodging. The old monk, who is charged with the care of it during the absence of his brethren, refused, in a direct and positive tone, to admit me under his roof, alledging, that there were many French spies in the neighbourhood, and that I had a very suspicious appearance. I immediately produced my passport, to convince him that I was an Englishman, a step that could not fail to attract his attention, and I then informed him of the kind reception I had met with from the abbot and friars of his order at Catania, accompanying these proofs of my innocence, as to the crime of being a spy, which he suspected I was guilty of, with manifold intreaties. He at last listened to the voice of reason, and gave orders that our mules should be taken proper care of. It was a fast day, I had brought some excellent fish from Catania, which I desired my host to present to the

friar, and assist in cooking them. The monk's countenance became gradually more conciliating, and his manners less reserved. He ordered a matráss to be prepared for me in one of the dormitories, and another for my host, who having stripped off his coat, and turned up the sleeves of his shirt, was very busy in one corner of the spacious kitchen, preparing the fish, and making a sauce of wine and onions, whose grateful odour seemed to enliven the looks of the monk. We sat opposite to one another at a round table, nearly in the center of the kitchen. The fish were placed between us, and in a short time we called for a second course of them. The monk became more conversible every minute, and I felt a desire to convince him that I was an Englishman, as well in sentiment as by nature. I found out the channel to his heart, I condemned the actions of the French, and commiserated the poor old Pope in all his sufferings, exclaiming violently against the injustice of mankind towards him. The idea of harbouring a spy

seemed gradually to quit his breast; he became very friendly—"Are Englishmen Christians?" said he; "Undoubtedly," replied I, "and as sincerely so as any people upon earth." Their established church only differs from yours, in abolishing a few trifling ceremonies, and in not acknowledging the dominion of the Pope over the minds of men, or his title as head of the church; which might perhaps have been the case to this day, had not one of the Popes (imprudently in regard to his religion, but happily for us) offended a king of England in a mere affair of politics, who threw off his yoke, without making any other very material alteration in the religion of his kingdom*. We sat conversing upon a variety of subjects till ten o'clock, when the old man, very considerately, fetched me his best and warmest great coat, to guard me against the excessive cold air of the night, and wishing me a successful journey up the mountain, he conducted me to my cell. I threw myself upon the

* Alluding to Henry VIII.

matrass, but was kept awake by a heavy shower of rain, which made me fear that I should be obliged to return to Catania, without being able to ascend any farther. At eleven the weather cleared up, and upon being informed that the moon shone bright, I fell asleep.

I was awakened at one o'clock, and mounted my mule with hopes of reaching the summit, 16 miles from the convent, before sun-rise. The moon, that fair friend of travellers, threw a silver tint upon the mountain; the smoke appeared like a vast torrent, dashing from precipice to precipice, and filling the air with foam, or like a huge mass of Alpine snow, hurled by a storm with increasing velocity and magnitude, from the summit of some high rock, into the chasm below. I had a scene before me, that struck me at once with awe and admiration. As I ascended the cold increased, and the friar's great coat, added to two of my own, proved of essential service to me. The

woody region (*regione selvosa* or *boscherina*) commences at the convent, and is about ten miles broad. The ride by moonlight, independant of the grandeur of the scenery, continually before my eyes, was very delightful. I saw large herds of wild boars rooting under the trees; these animals are not, strictly speaking, wild, though they roam in the forests unmolested during eight or ten months in the year; they are fed in the remaining months, and consequently are not very shy at the approach of a human being. Their backs are covered with bristles, their mouths are provided with long tusks, and they are of a dark grey colour, differing in no respect from the wild boars of the forests in Germany, excepting that necessity obliges them to look upon man as their protector, rather than their enemy, therefore they do not fly before him: notwithstanding this, I must own that I should not like to find myself alone among a herd of them, though

my guide assured me, that they never injured any one without being provoked to it.

The ascent through the forest is very steep, and difficult of access for several miles. At four o'clock, we entered the desert region (Regione scoperta) about six miles in breadth, and extending to the crater on all sides. The reason for its being termed *desert*, is evident the moment you enter upon it, for it produces no kind of vegetation whatsoever, save only a few tufts of mountain grass, a small yellow flowering plant, and several lichens or mosses. The road becomes steeper as you ascend, and the loose lumps of lava, and thick bed of sand and ashes, render it almost impracticable for the mules to proceed. The air strikes as cold as I ever remember to have felt it upon the Alps. For the distance of two or three miles you have a mountain before you, called the Spino d'Asino, most probably a son of Etna. It is about three hundred feet lower than the highest point

above the great crater, and covered with snow throughout the year. After ascending near three miles from the woody region, we arrived at the plain of Elaüs (Piano d'Elao) in the region of ashes, (Regione cenerosa) forming a part of the desert region. This plain is about six miles in circumference, and is bounded by several mountains of ashes like the Spino d'Asino, which were apparently forced up from its surface. Here I was obliged to dismount, and proceed on foot with my guide, to see a new crater formed at the recent date of February last, and consequently unknown to naturalists. It is situated on the plain of Elaüs, about three miles from the highest summit of Etna, and was formed by the sinking, or giving way of a part of the plain, about a mile in circumference. Its shape is not, like that of most other craters, a reversed cone, but its sides are perpendicular, similar to those of a well. A small column of smoke, very strongly impregnated with sulphur, issues from a spot

about fifteen yards below the level of the plain, which gives a greenish tint to every thing around it, and crusts the stones over with a thick coat of flower of brimstone. I threw several pieces of lava into this crater in a perpendicular direction, and heard each of them resound upon an average, thirty times in forty seconds, which was as far as my ear could trace them. The sides of this crater are of a burnt argillaceous stone, without any regular arrangement of strata, and apparently without much cement, for whole masses of it are continually falling into the precipice. A person let down securely by a rope might perhaps make some interesting discoveries, without being much incommoded by the sulphureous vapours. From the circumstance of so extensive a space of the surface of the plain sinking into the bowels of the mountain, I am inclined to conclude that the latter is entirely hollow, and is nothing more than a vast, conic funnel, covering the immense furnace, incessantly

raging in the bowels of the earth, and that the crisis is approaching, when the whole plain will fall into the abyss of fire, and a new crater be formed, as extensive as the space which sinks in. This phænomenon took place with Mount Etna in the year 1537, and with Vesuvius so late as 1794; and in the course of time, I doubt not, but that they will both gradually decrease in height and extinguish themselves; of which the Zolfatara, near Naples, and several other ancient volcanos, which I have met with, are striking examples; or if the fire rages with too much fury to be extinguished, it will force up a new crater, and so on *ad infinitum*. This late addition to the curiosities of Mount Etna, is called “la fosse di Serrapizzuta,” from a kind of ditch of that name, adjoining it, about ten yards broad, and formed by that torrent of boiling water emitted from the great crater in 1755, which according to Brydone carried destruction with it through all the regions of the mountain. I have often tried

to convince my own mind of the true origin of this water, but never could find substantial proofs to support any one of the suggestions of various writers upon the subject: still I am of opinion, that the sea must have been the original supply. Brydone says, that the force of suction can never raise that element to the immense height of ten thousand feet; he seems to draw his conclusion from common cases, but the nature of Etna is such, that it may exhibit many phænomena which the greatest naturalists can never account for. It is certain that Stromboli and Vesuvius have connections with the sea, and that torrents of boiling water have frequently issued from the latter: if then those molehills, when compared with the Mongibello, possess a sufficient power of suction to extract water from the sea, why should not that power be proportionably increased, with regard to Mount Etna? My host assured me, that in several of his peregrinations with travellers up to the crater, he has

found many perfect shells, and a composition of a testaceous nature, neither of which were calcined, but appeared somewhat scorched, which probably was effected while they lay in the crater. He presented these specimens to the Prince of Biscari, in whose museum they are to be seen. A shell is so light a substance, that I can easily conceive that a number of them were sucked up with the body of water, and that many were dropped upon the sides of the crater; but, though this appears a striking proof, I cannot think of corroborating any contrary system upon the testimony of an illiterate Sicilian. Brydone supposes, that this water must have issued from the interior caverns of the mountain, which being opened and burst asunder by internal force, let out the melted snow contained in them. This hypothesis appears to have only one argument against it, which is the excessive and incessant heat of the mountain. Water is an element, which is collected into natural or artificial reservoirs by degrees, and a quantity so great as that which over-

whelmed the regions of Mount Etna, must have been a collection of ages. It appears, therefore, very unaccountable, how it could have been preserved from evaporation in the heart of a burning mountain. But to return from this digression : I followed my guide a little farther to the edge of a tremendous precipice, facing the east, where we sat down to breakfast upon some ham and a chicken, which my host had provided me with.

At a quarter before seven o'clock the lamp of day emerged apparently from the gulph of Tarento, and for some minutes the face of nature wore the appearance of a valley of fire. The surface of the sea, and the light clouds which floated between the summit and foot of Etna, were tinted with the warmest glow. The objects, before in confusion, were born, if I may use the expression, by degrees : as a painter finishes his painting, or a modeller his model, rendering every part gradually distinct, and marking it by the fixed cha-

racter which it is to bear, so the sun discovered to my astonished eyes, the waters, mountains, forests, valleys, cities, villages and hamlets, which lay scattered in the vast expanse below me : the shades of night being gradually dispersed, the tints became natural, and this scene so undescribably grand and elevating, lay before me like a large map. I could trace the rivers from their sources to the sea, and the ridges of mountains, till they finished in some bold promontory, or gradually decreased towards the shore. The little clouds, moving fleetly beneath my feet, added to the variety of the scene, and their flakey appearance formed a singular contrast with the tinted scenery below. The valley of Calanna, which lay immediately before me, is nothing more than a spacious chasm, bounded by frightful precipices ; a little beyond it is the volcano of Mazzarra, a son of Etna, which was raised in 1329, during one of the most violent eruptions of which we have any record. To enumerate the many

striking objects which I beheld from the summit of Mount Etna, it would be almost necessary to enter into a topographical description of the mountains, lakes, rivers, cities, &c. contained in the island of Sicily, for when the atmosphere is perfectly clear, they all lie beneath you as on a map, or like an extensive city when viewed from some high tower, or steeple. Imagine yourselves placed upon an elevation of upwards of ten thousand feet perpendicular height, from whence you can overlook a district of land and water. bounded by an horizon not less than seven hundred miles in circumference; and do you think it possible for a human being to behold at one view, this astonishing variety of scenery, without being struck with awe and veneration for the great author of all this beauty?

How insignificant do the most perfect works of man appear, when compared with those of Him who rules this, and number-

less other worlds*. After long and silent admiration of this undescribable scene, I ascended near two miles over the ashes, until I arrived at a course of lava about seven miles long, and one mile broad, emitted from a cavern near the crater seven years ago, now occupying a valley where the snow formerly had made a lake, or rather plain of ice. The surface of this lava is so very uneven as to render it almost impassable, and if you make one false step, you are in imminent danger of severely bruising, or even breaking your limbs. Having surmounted this difficulty, I proceeded up a steep place near half a mile high to the great crater. The depth of sand and ashes, and the loose lamps of lava scattered upon the surface of this ascent, rendered it so very fatiguing, that I could not climb more than ten yards without taking rest, and I really despaired being able to attain the summit, after so much

* For further illustration of the view from the summit of Mount Etna, *vide* Brydone's very elegant description.

exertion. My feet slipped at every step, I could hardly support myself. The smoke which issued from different places on the side of the ascent almost choaked me, and the column from the great crater drove me back twice, and offuscated the sun so as to leave me in a gloomy shade. My guide covered my face with the hood of a cloak he had with him, leading me on through the sulphureous exhalation, until we came to a spot, where, upon uncovering my eyes, I beheld at my feet the vast gulph of fire and smoke. I know not how to describe the sensations which I experienced at this awful sight, nor is it possible for words to paint the state of my feelings. Reflect a moment upon the appearance of an abyss three miles in circumference, emitting columns of thick vapour; upon the possibility of an eruption of fire and lava at the moment you are looking into it, and upon my relative situation in regard to the rest of the world, insulated, and far from those I esteem most; you may then easily account for my mind being in such a

state of confusion, that I literally do not know how I got down to the stream of lava, but when I arrived, I found my face and hands much bruised from the numerous falls which I had had, and my head in great pain from the acuteness of the vapours.

After repassing the lava, I again ascended a mountain of ashes, opposite the one leading to the great crater, and called *il Montagnolo del Filosofo*, to see a ruin known by the name of the Philosopher's Tower (*la Torre del Filosofo*.) This consists in a low wall about ten yards in circumference, and in some places even with the ashes, so that you would hardly discern its form from the few stones and pieces of mortar which remain, if your imagination was not assisted by a knowledge of its having once been a tower of some kind. It is difficult to decide the original use of a building of this nature, erected in a situation so very singular; but nine authors in ten inform us, that it

was built by Empedodes, a great mathematician and astrologer, to observe the stars and the phenomena of the mountain, and what is very probable, to raise himself to the dignity of a demi-god in the eyes of his fellow-creatures. This philosopher was born at Syracuse, and in all likelihood resided in his tower on Mount Etna during the most temperate season of the year, but who knows? It may be reasonably supposed, that it was erected for the emperor Adrian when he ascended the mountain. We have no proof of his not passing the night there to watch the crater, and in that case it was absolutely necessary that some covering should be made, more substantial than a tent, to protect him from the piercing wind which always blows upon such immense elevations.

From this ruin I descended near three miles to a small crater or hole, formed in the center of that stratum of lava which filled up the valley of the lake in 1791. It emits no vapour, is of a

reversed conic shape, and appears formed rather by eruption, than by any part of the mountain having given way. I heard a stone, which I threw into it, resound near twenty times, and it appeared to be fifteen seconds in reaching the bottom. The lava which surrounds it is of a surface so very uneven as to form precipices from five to fifteen feet high, and it was not without great difficulty that we gained the path which leads to the woody region. About the middle of the forest I dismounted my mule to inspect the grotto of goats (*la Grotta de 'Capri*) a cavern where people often pass the night in summer, and which, as well as the neighbouring rocks and trees, bears testimony of the many travellers who have visited Mount Etna from all parts of Europe. It appears that the lava overflowed some combustible matter, which being destroyed, and afterwards carried away by the frequent torrents of melted snow, a vacuity was left, now called the Grotto of Goats, being a place of resort of those animals.

There are many similar caverns in the streams of lava, some of which are used as cellars, and others are said to be so extremely cold, as to endanger the life of the person who enters them. In descending through the wood, I was highly delighted with the beautiful contrast between the fresh green of the oak, the rich autumnal tints of the beech, and the dreary grey of the lava. The more I admired the variegated landscape, the more I discovered the harmony of its colouring; and I never so ardently wished for the pencil of Claude de Lorraine as I do at present, if it were only to convince you, that it is not without reason that I write in a style little short of enthusiasm, when I attempt to describe these scenes.

Upon my arrival at the convent at about two o'clock, the monk and myself sat down to a large tureen of excellent soup, which was, as you may suppose, very acceptable after the fatigue I had undergone since

I left it. I arrived, thank God! safe and well at Catania at seven o'clock yesterday evening, having met with no misfortune upon this difficult tour, or any thing to discourage me from proceeding on my journey to Syracuse to-morrow, forty miles farther south. I could write about Mount Etna for a whole day together, but I should tire you with a multiplicity of ideas, which though strictly true, would to you appear wild and romantic.

LETTER VII.

Syracuse, 30th. October.

I AM just arrived at this renowned and ancient city, very much fatigued with my day's journey, having been obliged to satisfy the good appetite which a traveller generally enjoys, with a little fish and some bad water, not being able to meet with better provisions upon the road. I left Catania before sun-rise, and rode eighteen miles through an extensive plain, which takes its name from that city. It is of a sandy soil, producing spontaneously, prickly aloes, myrtles, arbutus's, and some other flowering shrubs. There are several lakes between Mount Etna, and the ridge of mountains which is to the south of this plain, one of them is forty-eight miles in circumference, and is called the Lake of Lentini, from a small city of that name on its banks, termed Leontinum and Leontium by various ancient authors. This was the first city founded in Sicily, and was in-

habited, according to several writers, by the Lestrigonians, which Pliny confirms. It is said that Hercules paid it a visit, and being highly gratified by the kind reception that he met with, acted very benevolently towards it, though I cannot find out in what manner.

The city of Herculaneum, overwhelmed by the lava of Mount Vesuvius, took its name from a pompous feast made upon that spot in honour of Hercules when he visited it, and the number of Grecian temples which we find dedicated to a demigod of that name, induce me to conclude, that some extraordinary personage of an athletic form so called did exist, and was known to the ancients as Samson is to us.

At the distance of nine miles from Catania I passed the river Alcantara in a ferry. This is the chief river of the island, rising at the foot of Mongibello, and flowing with a gentle current into the sea. The space between its mouth and Catania, a distance

of about fifteen miles, is productive of vast quantities of yellow amber, which the Catanese manufacture very expertly into ornaments of dress and use, and I may call this their chief export trade, as they supply most of the south of Europe with it. Having passed the plain, I rose by a steep ascent for near a mile, through a coppice of flowering shrubs, whose berries being dyed by the season with a red and purple hue, had a very pretty effect. I continued eight miles over an elevated plain of arable land, though it appears quite incomprehensible to me how the labourers are able to cultivate it, as it is covered with large stones and masses of lava, some of which could not be moved but by an union of force and mechanism.

The stones and pieces of limestone lying scattered over the plain in this manner, are all perforated by pholades, a species of marine worm, and exhibit other strong proofs of having been formerly covered by the sea, which from their

present forms must have played around them some thousands of years. The stratification of this plain is perfectly horizontal. The species of stone is primary calcareous, and upon its surface are many nodulated, black masses of ponderous lava. There are several deep chasms formed by torrents, of which now only a little brook remains, the sides of these chasms are curiously excavated by the force of the water in the form of caverns of a considerable size.

After descending from this elevated plain, I rode through a cultivated country for six miles till I arrived at a small house standing alone on the road side, where the mule drivers generally bait their mules, with an appetite so great, that I could have relished any dish from the hands of the dirtiest Sicilian cook ; but alas ! the host, and all his family, regardless of what travellers might arrive, was gone to mass at a church two miles distant, and had shut up the house. I summoned up my patience, and rode four miles farther when a little inn

afforded me a few fresh anchovies, some bad water, and a feed of corn for the mules. This miserable cottage, like the generality of those in the neighbourhood, consisted only of one large apartment which served as stable, pigstye, hencoop, kitchen, sitting room, and bed-chamber. The Hottentots of Africa cannot live in a more comfortless manner; and we are less astonished at their misery when we behold in Europe, and in Christian countries, people equally wretched. I proceeded over a plain of bare rock, producing only a few tufts of grass and stunted bushes. This likewise exhibited the strongest proofs of having once been at the bottom of the sea, and I should have been inclined to think that this element withdrew itself from its surface but a very few centuries ago, were it not that the Grecian and Latin authors make no mention of the sea having occupied these parts. I next ascended a low rock, forming a promontory in the sea, called the Grecian Ladder (*la Scala Greca*),

and rode over a plain more cultivated, but almost as rocky as the last. The first view of Syracuse was more striking than I had imagined. Its fortifications, of a modern date, give it a grand appearance; but its interior disappointed me beyond measure, for it is dirty, miserable, and povertystruck. Before I had passed all the outworks I entered eight gateways, and rode over four drawbridges, you may therefore easily form an idea of its numerous bastions, moats and ramparts, which recalled to my mind the entrances of some of the German cities. I was taken to the governor's palace for presentation, a customary ceremony, and a necessary precaution, that in case of disturbance, or any difficulties which might arise between the traveller and the inhabitants, the governor may recognize him on any application for justice. I dissipated the vapours occasioned by the Sirocco which has blown hard all to-day, by a tumbler of Albanello, the first wine of the island, not unlike Malaga, but stronger: it is rightly prized

throughout Sicily and Italy. The effect of the Sirocco varies according to the disposition or state of the blood of the person exposed to it. My servant was out of humour with every thing and every body around him; the mule driver was struck dumb for eight miles; as for myself I felt drowsy and stupid, and little inclined to ask questions or enter into conversation.

The warmth of this oppressive S. E. wind was about equal to that of a moderate heated oven; and if you add to this, the beams of a Sicilian meridian sun, you may easily suppose I have suffered very much from heat to-day. I could not account for the peculiar warmth of this wind; but according to the general opinion, it proceeds from the excessive heat of the deserts in Barbary, from which direction it blows, or from its coming to this island from between the tropics. The north and north-east winds are the coldest. This is attri-

buted to the frigid air which they bring with them, in passing over such vast tracts of sea and snow from which they can imbibe no warmth. Why then, should not a south wind, or one coming from any of the neighbouring points of the compass, be oppressive and hot? The wind undoubtedly derives its warmth or frigidity from the countries over which it passes. I have felt the south wind as cold in Switzerland, when it blows from the Alps on the south side of the lake of Geneva, as any north wind. This must proceed from its having passed over those vast mountains, and seas of ice. It has therefore been concluded, that passing over the extensive and burning deserts of Africa, the wind or current of air which crosses the Mediterranean must be warm, and consequently oppressive. Such is the Sirocco, of which there are different kinds named according to their variation, east or west, from the south point of the compass.

LETTER VIII.

Syracuse, 21st October.

THE Sirocco has blown with vehemence all day, and predominates so absolutely over my faculties as to render me very little disposed to enter into a dissertation upon the antiquities which I have seen in my ramble about this city and its environs; but as evening is the only period in which I have any time to address you, I must conquer the effects of this debilitating wind, and endeavour to make you participate in the enjoyment which I feel on visiting an island so interesting to every admirer of architecture, painting, and natural and ancient history. Palermo, Messina and Catania produce fine studies for the architect. The outlines and tints of the mountains throughout Sicily are grand and picturesque; they would afford the greatest instruction to the young artist, and the highest satisfaction to an

buted to the frigid air which they bring with them, in passing over such vast tracts of sea and snow from which they can imbibe no warmth. Why then, should not a south wind, or one coming from any of the neighbouring points of the compass, be oppressive and hot? The wind undoubtedly derives its warmth or frigidity from the countries over which it passes. I have felt the south wind as cold in Switzerland, when it blows from the Alps on the south side of the lake of Geneva, as any north wind. This must proceed from its having passed over those vast mountains, and seas of ice. It has therefore been concluded, that passing over the extensive and burning deserts of Africa, the wind or current of air which crosses the Mediterranean must be warm, and consequently oppressive. Such is the Sirocco, of which there are different kinds named according to their variation, east or west, from the south point of the compass.

LETTER VIII.

Syracuse, 21st October.

THE Sirocco has blown with vehemence all day, and predominates so absolutely over my faculties as to render me very little disposed to enter into a dissertation upon the antiquities which I have seen in my ramble about this city and its environs; but as evening is the only period in which I have any time to address you, I must conquer the effects of this debilitating wind, and endeavour to make you participate in the enjoyment which I feel on visiting an island so interesting to every admirer of architecture, painting, and natural and ancient history. Palermo, Messina and Catania produce fine studies for the architect. The outlines and tints of the mountains throughout Sicily are grand and picturesque; they would afford the greatest instruction to the young artist, and the highest satisfaction to an

adept in painting. The naturalist, whether volcanist or neptunist, would find sufficient food for his hypothesis. Etna would afford him proofs for his system of fire, and the mountains in the neighbourhood of this city would supply him with those necessary to defend his system of water. Each would find endless study, and continual satisfaction, in the pursuit of their favorite branch. The antiquarian would meet with the original Grecian models from which the Romans have copied their noblest works of art. The botanist would discover many plants, but little known on the continent of Europe, and in their highest state of perfection. The moralist might study his fellow creatures almost in a state of nature. There are parts which have but little communication with the seaport towns, where man is ferocious, uncultivated, and as ignorant of the ways of the world as an inhabitant of the Pelew Islands, and would be equally at a loss, were he to be conducted into a modern city where

commerce and the arts flourish, and bring with them the comfort and luxuries of life. Does it not appear strange that a nation should in a few centuries be so mournfully degenerated from its former state of superiority over the rest of the world? Here Seneca, Plato, Archimedes, Empedocles, Callimachus, and many other Grecian philosophers, improved mankind with their doctrines! This was the residence of the most magnificent monarchs, who were surrounded with a superfluity of grandeur and elegance! The greatest generals of Athens, of Carthage, and of Rome exercised the military art upon Sicilian plains! Fallen is all this greatness, and of it nought, but half corroded ruins now remain! The reflection upon this woeful change is gall to the honey of human vanity, and makes one look upon mankind and all their pursuits as the dream of a night, transitory and unsubstantial.

I will now proceed to give you some description of the present and ancient Syracuse. The city known at this day by that name is situated upon a peninsula about two miles in circumference, joined to the main land by a narrow isthmus, which forms two ports, one to the north called the Little Port, the other to the south-west called the Great Port. The former was the Porta Marmorea of the ancients, and is only calculated for the reception of galleys and small craft; the latter is five miles in circumference, and the entrance into it, on the east side, is one mile broad, which is defended by an old castle and a battery *à fleur d'eau*. About the year 1550 Charles the Vth, king of Spain and Sicily, united the two ports by means of several canals, and insulated the city to render it more safe against the inroads of the Saracens; by adding very considerably to the fortifications he made it almost impregnable, when well armed

and garrisoned. The interior of the city, as I have before stated, is very dirty and poverty struck in the strictest sense of the phrase. The houses are seldom above three stories high, and badly built. The dreadful earthquakes of 1693, which did not leave one stone of it upon another, have tended to add to its poverty, and reduce it to a state of misery from which it seems very improbable that it will ever recover. It has no commerce like Messina, and but very little intercourse with other countries. The government and religion too are calculated to keep the people in slavery and ignorance; it is therefore scarcely possible that they should ever be able to emerge from that state of absolute want into which they were thrown only a century ago by the above mentioned catastrophe. The church of St. Ignatius is worthy of observation, being of excellent design, and better execution. The convent of St. Lucia and Spirito Santo are two small neat buildings, containing some good paintings. They, like most of the churches in Sicily, are

paved with coloured and varnished tiles, which being kept clean have a neat effect, and supply the place of marble or wood, two rare, and consequently dear, articles in this quarter of the island. The palace del Bosco, and that of the senate, together with some few private buildings, would cut a handsome figure in the chief streets of any European capital: but these are raised from the pockets of the lower class, and tend only to form a greater contrast with the misery of their dwellings. The number of convents and nunneries is far too great in proportion to the size and population of the city. I never saw any where so many black gowns walking through the streets; half the people you meet are enlisted in the service of the church, and from their great ignorance they are more superstitious than any set of men I ever met with.

I am informed that during the short time the English fleet, under admiral Lord Nelson, lay at anchor in the Great

Port in July last, the city was quite metamorphosed into a gay, busy, and lively place. The peasants, attracted by the honest dealings of the English, came down with provisions of all kinds from the mountains, and pitched their tents upon the neck of land between the two ports, remaining there till the fleet set sail for Alexandria. It almost appeared as if the city was returning to its ancient splendour; and I have no doubt, from its relative situation in regard to Turkey, and from the excellence of its port, that if it enjoyed a free government and a liberal religion, it would in a short time engross the trade of many of the sea ports of Sicily, Italy, and the Adriatic. It is strange, but equally true, that a great many persons in this island entertain hopes of being one day subject to the English government; and I have met with some elderly people whose only wishes are to see that day before they die. I have already said more of modern Syracuse than it deserves; but if I have been

dull, or unentertaining, I request you to attribute it to the power of stupefaction which the Sirocco carries with it.

Ancient Syracuse occupied a space of ground full twenty miles in circumference, and consisted of four cities, whose names were Ortigia, Tycha, Acradina, and Neapoli. Ortigia was situated precisely upon the same peninsula as the present Syracuse; the remaining three lay to the north, and formed the most noble part of that city. Between Ortigia, Acradina, and Neapoli, and upon the isthmus, was an immense market place, most probably surrounded by large columns, of which five have been excavated from below the surface, about nineteen feet in height, and of a hard species of lime stone with large veins of quartz: This must have been brought from some distant quarter, as I have not met with a similar kind of stone in the island. Leaving the market place, and proceeding about a mile to the north-

west, you enter Neapoli (new city) situated amphitheatrically towards the great port, and immediately under Tycha, which occupied the plain above it. There is a fine theatre at Neapoli cut entirely out of the rock, upon which you read the word Philistides, just opposite the Proscenium, where it is near three hundred feet broad, and was, I doubt not, very handsome. A little to the north is a bath, and a road called the sepulchral road, winding through numberless sepulchres curiously excavated in the rocks. Some of them are roomy, and filled with niches for the lacrymatoriæ, or small vases of tears, which the relations of the deceased generally placed in the tomb, as tokens of their affection. It was amongst these sepulchres that Cicero found out that one in which the body of Archimedes was deposited, and which he relates to have been marked with the symbol of a globe, from which he knew it; but as time, or perhaps the hands of some of the Roman soldiery

have erased that mark, it is impossible to decide at present which was the tomb of that philosopher. There is a very perfect aqueduct cut through the rock, bringing water to this day eighteen miles; it is a work worthy of any age. Between Neapoli and Ortigia are the Latomie, or quarries of stone, from which the four cities were built. The rocks are half overgrown with bushes, the caves are large and picturesque, and the bottom is covered with a light soil, highly cultivated, so that the views in these Latomie are quite enchanting. In the north-western corner of one of the largest of these quarries is the ear of Dionysius, an immense cavern about seventy feet high, cut with wonderful art in the hard rock, and in the shape of part of the channels of a human ear, so that the sound of any noise or talking made in the cave concentrated into a small aperture at the top of it, which communicated with a private chamber, where it is said the tyrant Dionysius resorted, either to hear the

groans of his prisoners, chained up in the cave below, or to detect their secrets, and punish them accordingly. He had a private staircase cut out of the rock, by which he ascended into this chamber; part of it is still extant. This appears a strange tale, but several authors make mention of the fact; the tyranny of Dionysius was so great, and his character so black and cruel, that it is very probable he may have ordered a prison of this kind to be excavated, roused by suspicion, and a fear of conspiracies. Besides, I cannot devise any other use for a place of this singular form.

The present cathedral is built upon twenty-six fine Doric columns, whose flutes are a foot across at the base, from whence they taper elegantly towards the top. These formed a part of a very magnificent temple, dedicated to Minerva. I cannot conceive how the Catholics have been able to reconcile it to themselves, to erect a Christian church on Heathen pillars, and I am sorry that

they have destroyed such a venerable ruin. The fountain of Arethusa near the great port, is a curiosity visited by every traveler. It is a copious spring of clear water, which according to the opinion of the ancients, and that of many of the inhabitants of Syracuse, takes its rise near Olympia in Greece, and runs under the sea for the distance of five hundred miles. The river which is said to form this fountain, is called Alpheus: It is reported to have fallen in love with Arethusa, and to have come in search of her. Pindar, Timeus, Virgil, Ovid, Claudianus, Italicus, Pausanias, and Pliny, confirm the received opinion of the course of this river from Greece, and even attest, that the blood of victims, killed in sacrifice near the river Alpheus in Olympia, tinged the fountain of Arethusa in Sicily. Laying aside the improbability of a connection of this kind, I must own I was at first rather astonished at finding such an incessant spring of clear fresh water close to the sea, but my surprise was diminished, when I reflected up-

on the method which I have seen the natives of the isle of Elba, opposite the coast of Tuscany, take to procure fresh and sweet water. They scrape a hole in the sands upon the sea beach, and the clearest water oozes out of its sides in such quantity, as to fill a hole which would hold a gallon in less than a minute. It ceases therefore to be surprising, that fresh water should be so very near the sea, as it oozes down from the mountains. The chief singularity in regard to the fountain of Arethusa, is being upon an elevation, and upon an island, or rather peninsula, for there is no current round it, though there is water. The old castle, situated at the entrance into the great port, is of Saracen origin, and of a quadrangular form, with four towers, one at each corner. The gate and hall of audience exhibit some specimens of Moorish sculpture. There are a few pieces of cannon, and some invalids to protect the city from the Algerines.

I remain, &c.

LETTER IX.

Syracuse, November 1st, 1798.

I MOUNTED my mule this morning, and accompanied by a guide, rode in a north-west direction towards the castle of Epipolis. About a mile out of town I passed amongst the sepulchres of Tycha, similar to those of Neapoli. Some of them are in good preservation, and adorned with columns and frontispieces, which denotes their having belonged to families of some consequence, of whose grandeur not one bone, or even one atom, is now remaining. Leaving these tombs, once receptacles of the inanimate and corroding bodies of thousands of the most enlightened men in Europe, and ornamented with all the pageantry of the various symbols used to make death awful, and which are frequently more so than even death itself, I entered upon a spacious plain, about ten miles in circumference, formerly covered by the palaces,

temples, and houses of Tycha, of which few vestiges can now to be traced. The situation is very eligible for a large city. The basis is a hard calcareous rock; and the elevation above the sea is just sufficient to give it a fine prospect over Ortygia, the two ports, Neapoli, Acradina, Mount Hybla, the neighbouring mountains, and the intermediate country between it and Mount Etna, which appears in all its glory. I looked in vain for remnants of the fine palaces, noble streets, baths, temples, and other magnificent buildings which once adorned this plain: all I saw was a bare rock with a few excavations for cellars, and some deep ruts formed by the wheels of carriages or cars, like those extant at Pompeia, on the Apian way. After proceeding about four miles I arrived at the ruins of the castle of Sablo, built at the west end of Tycha, where the barracks were situated and called Epipolis, from the Grecian word, implying that it stood above the city to protect it,

and command a view of the neighbouring country.

Thucydides and Livy both agree that this fortress was of wonderful architecture, but give no particular description of it: all that now remains is an oblong square about one hundred and fifty feet in length and thirty in breadth, with three small parts of the foundation of the west end. These together with the wall which surrounds the square are built of hewn stones, each about three feet in length, one foot and a half in breadth, and one in depth, laid upon one another without any kind of cement. Around the castle are the entrances to several subterraneous passages, about nine feet wide, but chiefly choaked up with dirt and stones. I explored some of them which seemed to lead towards Neapoli, and Epipolis had undoubtedly a connection of this kind with the other parts of the city, either to facilitate the escape of the tyrants in case of rebellion,

or to serve as passages for the troops in time of war. The walls of the city are visible in several parts: they are also of hewn stone, and about ten feet thick. There is one of them facing the north, near five miles long, which was built in forty days by command of Dionysius at the time when Marcus Marcellus, the Roman general, lay encamped on that side of the city. I rode on a mile farther westward, and ascended a rock to another spot where there was a fortress called Euriolus, an outwork of the city; but there is nothing left to demonstrate what it was originally, except two very large round cisterns or reservoirs for water excavated in the rock. I believe some author, in treating upon Syracuse, mentions that the military chest of money, by far the richest collection of specie in the country, was kept in this castle, and this idea is universally believed by the peasants of a small village just under it, called Belvedere. They not only imagine the money to have been deposited here,

but likewise fancy that it is bewitched by the art of some necromancer, and are firmly persuaded, that some one will come from a distant country, who is master of the charm, to make it appear. This accounts for a singular adventure which I met with; the women and children called after me, following me through the village, and repeating the words "*i danari*, "*i danari*; the money, the money," almost incessantly. I turned round to ask my guide the reason of this conduct, as I thought they wanted to demand money of me; but he only answered by a sign for me to proceed, adding, that he would tell me afterwards what they meant. As they are particularly jealous of this hidden treasure, it would have been dangerous for me to have attempted to have taken any view, for which purpose I had brought my drawing board with me. This circumstance served to convince them more fully, that I had the book of the charm, and was the expected person who possessed the arca-

num to produce the money. My guide told me all this on our return home, and instead of undeceiving these poor creatures, he gave them to understand, that I really was a conjuror, and that having forgot a necessary part of my necromantic apparatus, I should return again in a few days, to make the money come forth. Would you think it possible that in the present enlightened age, there exists in Europe a people who are sufficiently credulous to believe a tale like this? How easy is it for the priesthood of the Catholic church, to establish an absolute dominion over the minds of such poor, deluded wretches, to make them bow down to images, acknowledge their agency for our Saviour, and believe in the superstitious stories of miracles, performed by pictures, and in all the dark deceits of their religion. On my road home I saw nothing worthy notice, except an extinguished volcano, of very ancient date, and a large black serpent.

This is a most solemn day in all Catholic countries, it is the anniversary of the feast of the dead, the day when the coffins are opened, and their contents exposed to view. My curiosity induced me to witness this scene, and spend an hour amongst the dried carcasses of many of my fellow-creatures under the convent of Capuchin Friars, situated in ancient Acradina, about two miles out of town. I descended through a large trap door into a kind of chapel under the church, where the bodies are placed up in niches, surrounded with branches of laurel, and lighted by wax tapers. My servant threw himself before the altar, where a number of hoary friars were singing the service adapted for the day. The friends of the deceased were visiting in great solemnity the corpses of their relations, whom they easily recognized from a slip of paper fastened upon the skull, or garment of each of them, upon which the name was written. Most of them were dressed in the habits of monks,

and placed in the attitude of prayer, with rosaries in their hands, and long white beards pendant from their chins. I saw several of the friars, apparently near eighty years of age, tottering round the chapel, who must very shortly be ranked amongst the number of the bodies in the niches. Though much struck with this scene, I could not avoid smiling at the corpse of an elderly man lying in a coffin with a glass cover: he was dressed in a brown scratch wig, silk coat, waistcoat, breeches and stockings, and fine shoes and buckles. You will easily excuse me, if I tell you, that the comic appearance of this odd figure made me laugh; and I have seen death for the first time in my life in a ludicrous light.

This visit has tended very little, as you may conceive, to awake any feelings of horror within my breast; for the carcases in the chapel under the Capuchin Convent being neatly adorned with

laurel, and lighted up with tapers, they lose entirely the disgusting appearance which they would have elsewhere, and you regard and touch them as were they mere statues. From this chapel I was conducted to the Latomie adjoining the convent, by a venerable old friar, who did not refuse a trifle that I offered him for his civility. These Latomie are very extensive and highly picturesque. You walk in a grove of orange and lemon trees, environed on all sides by bold, impending rocks, half covered with bushes, and inhabited by wood pigeons. There are several curious olive trees which spring out of the stone in a singular manner, and in some parts, when they have grown through the crevices, they have gradually split large masses of rock in twain. A violent thunder-storm detained me some hours at the convent, which I spent in conversation with the friars, and in admiring a very beautiful, and much esteemed painting of the head of St. Francis by an unknown

hand, but much in the style of Guido Reno, or one of his pupils. To-morrow I shall go in search of the Papyrus in the river Anapus, of which the ancients made paper; for the present,

I remain, &c. &c.

LETTER X.

Syracuse, 2d. November.

I WRITE to you daily, in order to give you an exact detail of every object which attracts my attention, and not to omit even the most trivial circumstance that may afford you any satisfaction; but should these long letters become tiresome, which I fear will be the case, you must attribute it to my desire of amusing you, and giving you some information of this interesting island.

I went this morning in search of the Papyrus on the banks of the river Anapus, and although I met with some obstacles before my return here, still the jaunt proved very agreeable and instructing to me, and I would recommend it to every one who may visit Syracuse. A boat carried me across the great port direct into the mouth of the river Anapus, about

two miles west of the peninsula. It was with difficulty that we steered through the forest of tall reeds, which almost stopped the navigation of this river, and after having proceeded about a mile, I observed a small current, for I can hardly call it a river, which, upon enquiry, I found to be the Ciane, near whose source, as fables report, Pluto entered the earth with Proserpine, after having stolen her away from near the river Alcantara. Ciane, the sister of Proserpine, met the robber upon the spot where the current now takes its rise, and endeavoured to rescue the fair captive; Pluto immediately stamped upon the earth, which opened directly, and he descended with his victim to his own kingdom. The disappointed Ciane, poor nymph, shed a flood of tears sufficiently copious to cause the present current, which took its name from that circumstance.

We continued to steer up the Anapus, and first met with the papyrus plant, about a mile and a half from the

Ciane, where it grows in great quantities, and continues to overhang the banks of that river all the way to its source, which is only five miles from where it empties itself into the great port. This rare plant shoots out a triangular stalk to the height of about seventeen feet, on the top of it is a large tuft of foliage like a bunch of rushes, which by its weight gives a bend to the stalk, and hangs over the river. The diameter of the stalk near the root is generally four inches, and varies in proportion to the height. These plants do not grow distinctly, but in tufts, or quantities so closely united together, that their foliage forms one dense mass of a fine dark green, with a tint of brown. The inside of the stalk when broken appears perfectly white, porous, and full of strings or veins: it may be easily split into fine slices, of which the ancients made their paper, laying them across one another, and keeping them some time under a press. The glutinous juice contained in the stalk served effectually as a size, and united the parts so

closely together, as to give the whole a smooth and even surface, well adapted to write upon. Paper of this kind has been made very lately, but it is rarely to be met with. That numerous collection of manuscripts found at Pompeia, and preserved in the Royal Museum at Portici, were all written upon this vegetable paper; but the natural size which it afforded, being either dissolved or consumed by the heat of the ashes emitted from Vesuvius, the paper now falls to pieces, if not handled with the greatest nicety, and bathed in oil, previous to the opening of the manuscripts, which were all found rolled up, and without any kind of binding.

After having sufficiently observed the scite of the source of the Anapus, and growth of the Papyrus, I left the boat, and ascended a hillock close to the river, to take a near inspection of two fine columns, which once formed part of a very magnificent temple, dedicated to Jupiter Olympus, wherein was a noble statue

of that god, dressed in a garment of gold by Hiero, king of Sicily. Valerius Maximus tells us, that the tyrant Dionysius stole this garment, under pretext that it was too heavy for the god during the heat of summer, and of too frigid a nature to keep him warm in winter; he therefore had him clad in a woolen robe, which was adapted to both seasons. Thus you find, that in the Heathen belief, as in the Catholic, the rich took advantage of the credulity of their inferiors, and illustrious robbers were as common as they are in our times.

I was admiring these two venerable pillars, when the god, in whose honor they were raised, caused the most tremendous claps of thunder, and alarming flashes of forked lightning, which I ever beheld in the heavens. The order of nature seemed convulsed, the clouds fled in whirlwinds through the regions of air. At one moment the whole hemisphere was dark and dismal, at another it appeared on

fire. I never witnessed any scene of this nature equally terrific. The rain at length came down in torrents, and we ran for shelter under the projecting tiles of a little cottage which was shut up.

My guide did not cease to invoke the most holy Maria, and St. John the Baptist, the patron of thunder and lightning, for the space of an hour, and trembled with fear, hiding his face at every peel of thunder. I repeated to him several times, that there is a God who watches over us, who ordains every thing, and whose almighty will is not to be averted by the whole army of saints and martyrs. He acknowledged the truth of this philosophy, but his fear overpowered his reason, and he remained in a most agitated state till the fury of the storm was abated. I then told him, a little ironically, that his saints had saved us, and that I owed my life to his kind intercession with them. No, says he, God will not injure you, because you come from a country inhabited

by a certain people called Quakers, who, I am informed, are the truest Christians, and the most just in their dealings with men. You will naturally suppose, that I was surprised at these words from the mouth of an illiterate Sicilian, and that they afforded me subject for meditation, while I was crossing the great port on my return home. Upon making a few enquiries, I found that this man attributes all England's glory to that sect, and believes that Quakers are the only people chosen of God to work miracles. These are singular ideas, to be found in the mind of a strict Catholic who lay sighing before the altar yesterday in the church of the Capuchins. The sickening Sirocco still spreads its debilitating influence over my faculties. Should to-morrow be fine, I shall roam amongst the Catacombs, and pay a second visit to the enchanting Latomie.

I remain, &c. &c.

LETTER XI.

Syracuse, November 3d.

THE thunder has rolled so incessantly, and the weather has been so very unpropitious, that I have only to-day been able to see the catacombs. These repositories of the dead, where a little dust and a few splinters of bones are the only vestiges of thousands of our forefathers, are situated about a mile from the outer gate of the present Syracuse in the ancient division of Acradina. An old hermit, who has the care of a gothic church built at the entrance into these catacombs, supplied me with a torch, and conducted me down the dark stairs leading to them. He shewed me in a recluse spot a fragment of a column of granite, erected on a pedestal, against which many of the primary Christians suffered martyrdom, and with the serious air of credulity he pointed to some spots occasioned by the stain of their blood. I said

nothing which might lead the grey-bearded old man to detect my disbelief in the possibility of blood-staining polished granite, and he told me that the very sight of this column had cured many diseases, for which reason it was held in high veneration throughout the island, and part of Calabria. We entered the catacombs; they are in much better preservation than those of Naples, although of a more ancient date; the reason of this evidently proceeds from the different species of rock in which they are excavated: at Naples it is of a sandy nature, with a coarse grain and little cement. Here it is a calcareous stone, composed of marine productions and sand, well cemented together. There are some caves, with eighteen or twenty different excavations for Sarcophagi, these very probably were allotted to certain families. I found several pieces of bones which are very much prized by the Catholics, from the general supposition that they must have belonged to some martyr. The ex-

tent of these subterraneous sepulchres is not ascertained, I walked in them until the old hermit begged I would return, fearful lest our torches should be entirely consumed, or that he might not be able to find the way out again. It is generally asserted in this neighbourhood that there are passages which extend as far as Catania (not less than forty miles), and tradition says, that before the lava overwhelmed that city two young men really found an exit under one of its churches, and that others have perished in the attempt. There are many chapels amongst the catacombs mostly of a circular shape, with a dome which ends in an aperture at the top, through which a few rays of light find their way into the chapel. These apertures were probably made to admit a circulation of air so necessary in a place where thousands of bodies lay corroding, to which many were added daily. It would be tedious to dwell any longer upon Syracuse*. I shall return to Catania to-morrow, and you will hear from me the following day, till then I remain, &c. &c.

LETTER XII.

Catania, 5th November.

BEFORE I mention to you the variety of agreeable and instructing objects which I have met with to-day, let me just take notice of my journey from Syracuse. About eight miles from that city is a ruin adjoining the road, built in the same style or architecture as the castle of Epipolis, or hewn stone, without any cement. Its shape is pyramidical, upon a square base, and very perfect, except the top, which seems to have been thrown down by violence. It is the received opinion that this little pyramid was erected by order of Marcus Marcellus, the Roman general, in commemoration of a victory which he obtained over the Syracusans, commanded by the tyrant Dionysius, and that the latter, upon the evacuation of their territory by the Roman troops, ashamed of having a testimony of their defeat handed down to posterity, destroyed

the inscription which illustrated the purport of the edifice. This is a very rational opinion, and as there is no ancient author who contradicts it, or gives us any one more satisfactory upon the subject, I should adopt it as the fact. I arrived at a miserable hamlet, containing two or three habitations, called Castel dell Agnone, twenty-four miles from Syracuse, at three, with a traveller's appetite; but such is the extreme poverty of the country that neither for love or money, to use a common phrase, could I obtain more than a couple of eggs and a little hot, half-baked, black bread, to satisfy the hunger of myself, my servant, and dog; luckily a little fruit, which I had brought from Syracuse, served to increase this scanty meal. We proceeded slowly and did not reach Catania before eight o'clock, which afforded me an opportunity of seeing the finest sheet-lightning I ever beheld. The whole west seemed on fire, and in continual motion, which had an awful and grand effect.

The renowned museum of the prince of Biscari was the first object which attracted my attention this morning. It is filled with the choicest antiquities, chiefly collected under the immediate direction of the prince, who, being a true friend and encourager of literature, has spared neither money nor pains in bringing to light many fine specimens of Grecian sculpture and architecture, which have lain in oblivion for two thousand years, and without the active exertions of so liberal a character, might have continued unsought after for two thousand years to come. Before you enter the museum you are conducted into two court yards or small squares, full of antique columns of granite and marble, Grecian and Roman tablets of inscriptions, statues, sarcophagi (or stone coffins) amphoræ (or vases for wine) of an immense size, and several other species of antiquities, too unwieldly to be placed under a roof, and which cannot be injured by being exposed to the external air. The first

chamber is full of penates (or household gods) of bronze metal, instruments used in agriculture, lamps, &c. all very choice and rare of their kind; but in particular I was struck with a small statue of Mercury, and another of Mars: The attitude of the former, and expression of the latter, excel what I have generally met with in statues or paintings. The next apartment is an extensive gallery, divided into three parts, containing statues, fragments, and capitals of columns, cornices, busts, inscriptions, mosaic pavements, &c. The most remarkable amongst these curiosities is a fine piece of Grecian sculpture, representing the body and one arm of a Jupiter of gigantic size. This fragment was found in the theatre of this place, and if perfect would be a noble counterpart to the Farnesian Hercules, for what is now remaining is of the finest proportion, and equal to that chef d'œuvre. A Hercules, rather damaged, and a bust of Pyrrhus, merit the artist's attention, as well as a head of

Scipio Africanus, in bas relief. One side of this gallery is entirely covered with the most valuable Etruscan or Grecian vases, equal to any thing that I ever saw in Naples, and arranged in a light and simple manner, each of them standing upon a projecting shelf, so that you can see the shape in which their merit chiefly consists at one view. In several of them are small dry splinters of bones, the only relicts of some perhaps noble Grecians, who once acted a brilliant part on the stage of life. I obtained some of these bones and several other curiosities, which, on account of their great number, are not held in very high estimation here. In another chamber are penates of chalk and clay, formerly in use amongst the poor, as those of bronze metal were amongst the rich. It would be tedious to enumerate the specimens of marine productions, volcanic emanations, minerals, beasts, birds, &c. &c. contained in the other apartments: two of these are occupied by ancient arms and armour,

another by antique dresses, &c. the whole forming one of the compleatest museums I ever saw on the Continent, which does honour not only to its possessor, but to the whole island. There are many glass cases full of monsters, amongst which I was struck with a snake with a head at each extremity of its body, so that it had no tail, and a cyclops, or kid, with only one eye in the center of its forehead.

It was not without regret that I left this repository of interesting curiosities, and bent my steps towards the church of St. Nicholas, to hear a celebrated organ made by a monk named Donato. Music never had such a power over me, nor did I ever conceive that it could be brought to so great a state of perfection. This organ not only imitates most musical instruments in a simple state, but gives you likewise the variations and excellencies of each, so as to enchant you beyond measure, and make you quite disgusted with the harsh tones of

half the church organs on the Continent. The monk who has the management of it was out of town when I passed through this city a few days ago, but upon his return the abbot mentioned to him my desire to hear it played, and having fixed upon the day, he accordingly exhibited all his skill to convince me that some merit lay in his own talents, as well as in the perfection of the instrument. I was informed, that several great personages of the north of Europe have offered large sums of money for it, but the monks consider it as an everlasting fixture in their church, and are agreed not to part with it, until necessity may induce them to accept of a liberal offer.

My Valet de Place next conducted me to the museum of the Chevalier Giueni, containing a very extensive collection of lavas, fossils, and marine productions, arranged in an exquisite manner in six neat apartments, with the name and qualities of each specimen written upon it by the Chevalier himself, in Italian and French, so that a

person who is not a professed naturalist, may be instructed and amused by spending a few hours in this museum. The Chevalier, who I am informed is a generous and liberal minded man, takes infinite delight in the study of natural history, and at his leisure hours has made some curious statues and flowers of shell work, and taken views upon the spot of various eruptions of Mount Etna, which are judiciously hung upon the walls of the apartment containing lavas. All those minute shells, whose beauties cannot be discovered by the naked eye, are placed under magnifying glasses, of which there are upwards of three hundred in one bureau. A man who can spend his days in the pursuit of a study so agreeable and entertaining, must lead a much happier life than he who is actuated by a thirst for glory, and a love of money. Upon inspecting into the minds of both these characters, even supposing the latter to have attained the highest pitch of earthly grandeur, we should find that

the former is really most to be envied, and that he has experienced less of the troubles of this world, and tasted more true pleasure in the career of his days, than the latter.

I left this museum to observe the ruins excavated by order of the Prince of Biscari, which consist in a Grecian theatre, a Roman amphitheatre, and Grecian hot and cold baths. These are all in a state of good preservation, and bear a character consistent with the luxury and riches of the times in which they were erected. All the columns, cornices, and other decorations, being conveyed to the museum of the Prince, they now only present a noble skeleton of bare walls, of which I need not make any farther mention. The baths were used as churches for many centuries, and the ignorant friars of the convent above, were never aware of their original use. The Prince at last caused them to be stripped of their fantastical decorations,

split their altars asunder, and erased the representations of saints, which were daubed upon their walls. I think I have now given you a description of every thing worthy remark in this city. I purpose setting off for Messina to-morrow, and as my route to Giardini will be changed, it may be in my power to communicate something interesting to you. In the mean time,

I remain, &c.

LETTER XIII.

Giardini, 7th. November.

SINCE I wrote last I have been very much entertained, and as much fatigued. I left Catania an hour before sun-rise yesterday morning, in order to visit the great chesnut tree, thirty miles from that city, and reach this village the same night ; this object was accomplished after sitting twelve hours upon my mule, ascending precipices, climbing over walls, breaking through fences, wading through torrents, and passing over roads, half stopped up by large blocks of lava and rock. But I was well rewarded for all this trouble, and saw a part of Mount Etna very little known to my countrymen, which, taken in a natural point of view, may be considered as the most delightful country under the sun. The villages, which are numerous and large, are generally situated under ancient

volcanellos, or hills projecting from the primary volcano. These are covered with that light productive soil which always lies upon the surface of the lava, and are cultivated in delightful vineyards and orchards. I met with the chesnut, apple, pear, peach, fig, cherry, orange, lemon, date, and several other fructiferous trees growing almost spontaneously, and producing the most delicious fruit. Some of these, which are later in shedding their foliage, were dressed in a delightful verdure, while others, coloured with the richest tints, were bidding a last farewell to autumn; you may easily conceive the harmony and beauty of this scene, to which may be added the contrast formed by the romantic cottages of black lava, whose ruddy roofs peeped over the yellow vine. I felt raised above all terrestrial objects to such a degree, that forgetting myself, I seemed wrapt in a dream of a future world, and all the globe of earth lying at my feet.

But leaving this digression; we stopped a short time to bait at the village of La Zaffrana, so called from the quantities of saffron flowers which are produced in the neighbourhood. A stream of lava very nearly spread desolation over this village in the year 1790, but having divided itself into five different currents, it grew congealed before it reached it. This event, though perfectly natural, is noted in the annals of the Catholic church, as one of the greatest miracles ever performed by the veil of St. Agatha, which was brought by the Archbishop of the diocese in grand procession from Catania, and tickets were fastened to the neighbouring rocks and trees, inscribed with the words taken from the Bible, "*Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.*"

I arrived at the celebrated chesnut tree, commonly called *Il Castagno de' Cento Cavalli*, at three o'clock, after having been led astray several times by an inexperienced

guide. This singular production of the vegetable kingdom, is composed of five old trunks, whose circumference may be about fifty paces, or one hundred feet, but they are so very much decayed, that it is impossible to recognise their having been united. The ramification is neither picturesque nor extensive, and the house which was erected for the reception of the fruit in the center of the trunk, is now fallen to ruins, and only presents a heap of stones to the view. Had I not been previously apprized of the state of this immense tree, I should have been much disappointed at that in which I found it; and was it not for the enchanting country you ride through to see it, I should not think it an object worthy the traveller's notice. There are several other large trees of the same nature very near it, one of which, called *Il Castagno della Nave*, (Chesnut of the Ship) is near twenty yards in circumference, and a healthy tree. Another nearly the same size, is termed *Il Castagno della Navotta* (Chesnut of the little Ship.)

From that spot I descended direct to Giardini, a distance of fifteen long miles, and a most shocking road. The villages I passed through were large, and rather better than those nearer Catania. In Mascari, a small town very pleasantly situated, it happened to be the annual fair, which afforded me a curious sight of great numbers of the peasants of Etna dressed in tawdry silks. I could hardly imagine that persons so richly clad, were the inhabitants of those miserable cottages of lava, wherein they live in the greatest filth, and most abject misery during all the rest of the year. Just at this time of gaiety, which lasts only a few days, they come forth like butterflies in May, and then creep into their black Chrysolis's, to remain buried in oblivion until the following fair.

I never met with any people who approach so near to the brutal state, as the ignorant and superstitious inhabitants of Mount Etna. Take away from this race of men the physical power of speech, and you

would find their reason very little, if any superior, to what is called instinct in beasts. I will not dwell upon a subject which would lead me into a train of reasoning, and have no other tendency, than that of tiring both yourself and the writer. Upon arriving at the inn, I found it occupied by a Catanese party, and several other travellers, so that it was with difficulty, and only after repeated entreaties, that I obtained admission into a little anti-chamber with two beds, one of which was occupied by an arch priest, and a country fellow, whom he called his cousin. The former was loquacious ; we conversed together for two hours upon the state of Europe, and had arranged matters for the utter destruction and extermination of the French nation, when he nodded his head and fell asleep. At half past five he arose to continue his journey towards Messina, and finding I was awake, he exerted all his power of argument, and talents of persuasion, to convert me to the Catholic

faith. Sometimes we disputed with fervour, at others we reasoned coolly upon the subject, but it was all in vain. I was very glad to wish him a pleasant journey, without desiring ever to meet him again.

I rose at sun-rise, and have employed the morning in seeing the antiquities of Taormina, a small dirty city, situated upon a bold and high rock, two miles above this village. My guide first conducted me to a celebrated Roman artist, commonly called Don Titto, though his proper name is Lusiere, well known amongst the virtuosi in the art of painting, as being excessively nice in imitating nature, and frequently travels from one country to another, to take views of the most interesting remnants of antiquity. His present stay here will be about twelve months, when he intends to proceed to Syracuse and Agrigentum. His collection, when completed, must be a fund of instruction and

amusement. He received me very politely, and shewed me several excellent drawings of views in the neighbourhood of Rome and Naples, which though in water colours, have a more natural effect than any that I ever met with in oil, even by the first masters, and confirmed me in the opinion, that for landscapes, water colours are preferable to oil. Don Titto informed me of a recent order from the Court of Naples, for all foreigners to be seized and imprisoned, who should be found taking views of any kind in the country about Taormina; he therefore judged it proper to obtain the Governor's permission, if I had any desire to make sketches of the theatre. I followed this wise counsel, and was conducted to his Excellency, a fine old man of eighty, who has served forty-five years in the king's body guards. He received me with marks of the greatest affection, embraced me, blessed my nation and self several times, offering his best services wherever they might be acceptable

to me. In short, he quite overwhelmed me with kindness, which caused me to leave him with regret. What a contrast is the character of this venerable Eld, to that of the German governors of pitiful cities, or small fortresses, who abound in pride and arrogance, and whose habitations are never approached but with fear and trembling !

The theatre of Taormina is the finest pile of ruins, and the most striking vestige of ancient grandeur, that I ever beheld. It is situated upon a high rock, which forms a bold promontory, and even seems to bid defiance to the majestic Etna, while the tottering ruins which crown its summit peep down upon the briny waves below. The view from this spot must elevate and enchant the soul of any one who has the smallest taste for the sublime and beautiful. The boundless ocean, the vast Gibello, with its curling smoak, the extensive country, the picturesque rocks, whose frightful precipices seem to hang only by

a cloud over the city of Taormina, the richness of the tints below, and the pure whiteness of the driven snow upon the summit of Etna, form a combination of the grandest objects which can possibly be united in one scene. The choice of this situation is in itself a sufficient criterion to judge of the refined taste and exalted ideas of the Romans, who were the founders of this noble edifice in the days of Julius Cæsar, soon after the subjugation of the Lestrigonians, who colonized this part of the island from the Morea. This theatre is very extensive, and in sufficient preservation to give a just idea of its former state. The subterraneous canals for conducting water, the passages for the actors, and the public and private entrances, are all open: the holes excavated for the reception of the long poles, which supported a kind of awning over the whole, are as perfect as if they were destined for present use. It is allowed by antiquarians and artists, that this is the finest remnant

of Roman magnificence existing in any country, excepting only the Colosseum, whose situation must be very much inferior, as the neighbouring buildings must diminish the effect of the whole which is here perfect. At Taormina there is nothing to contemplate but the surrounding scenery; no insignificant object interferes to divert the mind for one moment, from the train of pleasing reflections into which it must infallibly be drawn by the view constantly before the eye. You are naturally most struck at first sight with a small obelisk upon a hill, than with a castle in a valley. Such is the comparison which may be made between the Colosseum and this theatre, without diminishing the intrinsic merit of the former.

The Naumachia is in the city. It is a large space of ground surrounded by a massive wall, full of niches for statues, and like the theatre, bears testimony of the magnificence of its founders. The other

ruins consist chiefly of reservoirs, which served to supply this Naumachia, the city, and theatre with water. One of them is of a similar nature to the Piscina Mirabile at Baja, near Naples; its roof is supported by a row of eight pillars of brick, covered with that durable Roman cement, which takes a polish, and becomes harder by age. I observed several other antiquities of less note, which would interest you very little, were I to give you a detailed description of them; I will just mention one, however, merely on account of a circumstance attending it, that will make you smile. Upon an antique fountain, opposite the cathedral is a sphinx; as this was a profane figure, it has been crowned and converted into a Madonna, or Virgin Mother. I leave you to imagine what a ridiculous appearance this quadruped saint has, and remain, &c.

LETTER XIV.

Messina, 11th November.

UPON the journey from Taormina to this city, I saw nothing worthy remark, which I have not noticed in my letter of the 26th of October from Catania, except some ancient mines about four miles from the little village of Fiume di Nisi; they once produced great quantities of gold and silver, but exhibit no other vestiges of their former excellence than a few grottoes, from which the ore was excavated upon the summit of a high rock of granite; this convinces me, that the former inhabitants of the island had no idea of mining, and only dug where the gold glittered; from the nature of this part of the isle, and from the quantity of gold which was found mixed with the sands of the torrent of Nisis, I think it natural to conclude, that the basis of this rock must be as productive, or more so, according to common

rules, than its summit, of which the Roman colonists were not aware. A number of Saxons were permitted to open these mines afresh about the year 1730, and continued working them for forty years, when they were abandoned by the colony, and nobody else has thought proper to renew the undertaking.

The pounding mills, and several other buildings erected on the banks of the torrent, were almost razed to the ground by the earthquakes of 1783, but might be repaired at a moderate expence, and I doubt not but a speculator in these mines would derive great profit from penetrating farther into the heart of the rock. This is not likely to be effected by any one but a foreigner, as the inhabitants of the island have not sufficient courage to spend a farthing upon an uncertain pursuit. That spirit of enterprize, which was so manifest in the southern kingdoms of Europe, at the time when Columbus, Cortes, Pizarro,

and Albuquerque discovered an unknown world, ploughed the boundless ocean in search of continents and islands, which they were uncertain of finding, and with steady perseverance and unwearied zeal passed over the frigid summits of the Andes, and marched over thousands of the slain upon the plains of Mexico in quest of gold; that spirit of enterprize which at that period signalized the Spaniards, Portuguese, and Italians, seems now fled to northern climates, where the natives will exert all their powers in excavating the viler metals from the bowels of the earth, while the former neglect the prospect of obtaining even gold.

I had proposed setting sail for Palermo this morning, but forgot that it is the anniversary of St. Martin, when every body in Messina must eat a bit of Turkey, and it was quite impossible for my friends to procure me a Sparonaro, (a small boat used for coasting) and a preferable, and

more safe conveyance than upon mules over land, but particularly so on account of the banditti, which a traveller of course is anxious to avoid. I have been rambling up the hills, and amongst the groves of orange and lemon trees, and am more delighted with the country, the more I become acquainted with it. The style of cultivation, and the outlines and tints of the mountains, are adapted to enchant the senses, more than the face of any country I have visited hitherto. The views in the Black Forest, and in Austria, in the environs of Berne, Lausanne, Vevey, Geneva, St. Maurice, Genoa, Sienna, and Naples, have all a peculiar character, which though it strikes the beholder at first with wonder and delight, loses gradually its influence over the mind, and fatigues it with a sameness hardly to be described. The environs of Messina appear in continual variety, there is a pleasing mixture of the grand, the picturesque, and the gay, calculated to

raise a desponding spirit, and exhilarate the heart.

I dined with a large party at the Dutch consul's; we took a walk to see the famous Charybdis, situated on the outside of that sickle-shaped neck of land which forms the port. We crossed over this latter in a boat, and walked near a mile on the neck of land towards the light-house, built to apprize vessels of the vicinity of the troubled waters. The evening was very calm, and Charybdis was sufficiently tranquil to suffer a boat to pass over its current, without affecting it in any other manner, than by carrying it swiftly down the Faro for about the distance of two miles, where its power ceased. A good swimmer, with the current in his favor, might at that time have passed over this little whirlpool, without running any risk; but at noon when the waters rise, it becomes turbulent, and a great part of the Faro ap-

pears in a boiling state: in high winds and storms it is impassable, and vessels are obliged to keep close to the shore of Calabria for fear of being drawn into its current. The sea is then truly terrific; if the current runs southwards, it carries ships down towards Taormina, if northwards, it will hurl them towards the rock of Scylla, almost opposite the Torre del Faro, and about eight miles from Charybdis. This gave rise to the well known Latin proverb, "*Incidit in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charibdim* *". The ancients were so inexpert in nautical affairs, and generally made such extravagant descriptions of every object of terror, which they had not sufficient philosophy to account for, that it is not surprising that they should have painted Scylla and Charybdis in the most frightful colours. One of them in speaking of the former, says, that rock was always covered with clouds, and so extremely high and perpendicular, that no man could ascend it, not even if he had twenty hands and twenty

* Who shuns Charibdis, upon Scylla falls.

feet. This author must have founded his description upon the reports of mariners, who were as much addicted to telling marvellous stories as the Dutch sailors, employed in the whale fisheries, who return home with incredible accounts of floating islands, and fish in the Frozen Ocean several miles long. I can easily imagine, that an acute point or projection of land at the bottom of the sea, stops the violent current of the Faro ; that this projecting point of land is excavated by the incessant force of the waters into caves, and that the sea playing in them, and meeting with this restriction, causes the surface to be in continual agitation, which increases according to the velocity of the current, or turbulence of the weather. Brydone gives a very clear and accurate account of this natural curiosity, and I would recommend you to read his work, from which you will derive much instruction and amusement, in every thing that relates to this island.

I am going to trust myself once more to the mercy of the waves, having secured my passage for Palermo, about two hundred miles to the westward of this city, in a Sparonaro, which conveys money and letters for the merchants, and keeps within gunshot of the shore, so that I beg you will not be anxious on my account. The post arrived here yesterday from Reggio, and brought me eight letters from England, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy: as they all inform me of the welfare of my friends, I shall embark to-morrow with a light heart.

I remain, &c. &c.

LETTER XV.

Palermo, 17th. November.

BY the kindness of Providence, I arrived at this city safe and well yesterday afternoon, but was so excessively fatigued, from having passed four sleepless nights in the Sparonaro, and from the uneasy motion of that little vessel, caused by the boisterous sea, that I have not recovered sufficiently to describe my voyage to you till to-day; but before I proceed, let me say a few words upon the nature of a Sparonaro. It is a small vessel, built like the long boat of a man of war; in length about thirty-six feet, and in breadth eight at the widest part. It is manned by six rowers and a pilot, who is continually at the helm, and is either the owner of the boat, or one who has a share in it. When the wind is favorable these vessels carry a mainsail and jib; being very long and narrow, they sail with great velocity, and when ac-

tuated by the force of both wind and oars, which is often the case, they may be said to outsail the wind. As they are employed to traverse the channel of Malta, and carry letters, money, passengers, and provisions to different ports in Sicily and Calabria, it is necessary that they should be excessively fleet to escape the Algerine rovers and Turkish privateers, which are continually cruising round the island; and they have answered their purpose so well, that I never heard of any one of them being either taken or lost. The mariners who navigate them, are generally well experienced in the knowledge of the state of the heavens, and will foresee the approach of a storm, twelve hours or more, before it reaches them; they then steer for the nearest port, and wait till its fury is abated. At the stern of the boat is an awning covered with oil cloth, which is so low that you must always be in a recumbent posture. This I found exceedingly fatiguing the second and third day, and almost intolerable on the fourth.

In such a vessel I embarked, together with my servant and dog, my only travelling companions, soon after mid-day on the 12th instant, and the wind was so very propitious, that we were carried twenty-four miles against the current of the Faro in two hours. A calm succeeded, and the sailors worked at their oars for sixteen hours, which brought us off Cape Orlando, ninety-four miles from Messina, and one hundred and six from Palermo. The coast between the former city and this Cape is bold and sterile, but without population; this rather surprised me as the soil upon the rocks appears light and black. It is worthy of observation, that although this side of the island is nearest, and directly opposite to the Italian coast, still there are very few vestiges of the Grecians or Romans to be found, and the country appears always to have been in its present state. On the eminences there are watch towers to give alarm to the interior, in case of invasions by the enemy, this was effected by means of large fires, as is the

plan in Switzerland, and other mountainous countries.

Just as we had doubled Cape Orlando, we found the sea ran high into the shore, and the south-west quarter of the horizon was very cloudy; but as there was not much wind, I pressed the sailors to proceed, not dreaming of an approaching tempest, which they however foresaw, and returned with dispatch to a small port, sufficiently spacious to contain four boats on the east side of Cape Orlando, and so immediately under that rock as to be well sheltered from S. and S. W. winds. Here the Sparonaro was drawn upon the beach, and the mainsail boom being laid from poop to prow, and covered with a black woolen cloth, it formed a good tent to protect us against the bad weather. At eleven the wind blew very fresh, continuing with increasing fury all that day and the following night. The sea ran literally mountain high; the spray was carried above fifty

yards into the air, and fell down like rain. At four o'clock I witnessed a very interesting scene: a small vessel of about eighty tons burden, freighted with deal boards, was observed near a league out at sea, tossing about in a terrible manner at the mercy of the waves. As she could not keep the sea on account of the very high wind, she was obliged to run on shore, and the sailors on board her being well acquainted with every creek on the coast, chose a sandy beach to run upon, hoping to save their own lives and the cargo, which being light would be driven on shore, should the vessel go to pieces, and be easily collected on a sandy beach. By a clever manœuvre, the pilot of the vessel brought her on shore in a slanting direction, and not right a-head, so that she struck with less violence, and before her lower beams went asunder the merchandize was got on shore, and the vessel being lightened, was hauled upon the beach in a state fit for repair, and only half full of water. I walked near two

miles to see her soon after she had run on shore, and found a number of country people assisting in saving the cargo, but I must own my indignation was roused, when I observed as many as thirty women working incessantly, whilst as many men were standing idle upon the beach, gazing at the breakers dashing over the vessel. Several of the young girls carried twenty or thirty long planks without intermission, many of which I could not have lifted, and gave astonishing proofs of their strength; this formed a singular contrast with the idle boors who were looking at them. The wind continued increasing and howled amongst the rocks, the night was very dark, and the sea roared incessantly; the rain fell copiously at intervals, and added to the awful rage of the storm. If a small mass of the rocks which overhung our little port had fallen upon us, or if the slender cords had broke, we must have been inevitably lost. In the various countries and trying situations in which I have

found myself, I never experienced such terror as during that night.

The following day the storm abated gradually ; I ascended the rocks to look into the state of the country, which I found in general well cultivated, and so productive of corn and fruit trees, that I was surprised to see it so thinly inhabited, and that its few inhabitants should be so miserable. The night of the 14th was much calmer than the preceding one ; I foresaw that we should set sail the following day. The sky became clearer, and the waves dashed against the rocks with less fury ; worn out at last with fatigue, I fell asleep for a few hours.

The next morning I walked up to the summit of the Cape, to see an old castle half in ruins, but still inhabited, called Castel dell' Anno. It belongs to the family of the Prince Castelreale, who erected it at the time when the nobles of this island were

absolute in their domain; before the union of the Two Sicilies. Its situation, extent, the fragments of the walls, and the ruins of prisons are proofs of its strength, and of the former despotism of its possessor. The parish church, which now occupies one front of it, is all that remains of its original grandeur. The priest, who inhabits a few tottering rooms adjoining the chapel, was particularly anxious to shew me all the curiosities belonging to it, and to explain the miracles performed by the wonderful Madonna of Castel dell' Anno, a small wax figure kept in a glass case, with iron bars, and a curtain before it, and standing upon the chief altar. As I observed the ceremony of dipping my finger in the holy water, and crossing myself with it upon entering the church, this priest believed I was a catholic, and conducting me to the altar, he asked whether I wished to see the Madonna. Willing to carry on the deception for the sake of satisfying my curiosity, I answered in the affirmative,

and fell upon my knees. He then lighted two wax tapers before the curtain, which he drew up, and discovered a delicate little figure of the Virgin Mother behind the iron bars, somewhat similar to the appearance of a bird in a cage.

After this ceremony was performed, and we had beat our breasts, and muttered our Pater Nosters, the priest gave me a piece of wool from under the glass case, which he informed me with the serious air of credulity, was capable of quelling a storm, and of preserving me from all evil, if I prayed to the Madonna of Castel dell'Anno in any case of necessity. He then presented me with a picture of the Virgin, which assured me of her favor. Enriched by these treasures, I proceeded to admire some of a different species, the possession of which would have afforded me much more satisfaction, than all the relics of saints, and other curiosities of that nature contained in Europe. These consisted

in four large silver lamps, and a service of plate for the Sacrament, all elegantly adorned, and purchased with money given as alms, in donation to the church. The priest next produced a quantity of rich vests of scarlet, blue, white, black, orange, brown, violet, and other coloured sattin, bordered and ornamented with gold lace. Each colour is adapted to a certain saints' day: the black with gold for funerals had a very rich appearance. After taking leave of this servant of the church, and bestowing a little alms to the Madonna, a ceremony of all others not to be forgot, I walked out upon the terrace of the Castle, where there are five pieces of rusty cannon, which I should think it highly dangerous to fire. They are placed there to keep off the pirates, and Mahomedan invaders, but the priest told me, that he confided in the Madonna, and not in the cannons, and very likely the one is as capable of protecting him as the other^r. I forgot to mention that this man and


others assured me, that this little inanimate figure is so very much attached to her present situation at Castel dell' Anno, that upon being deposited several times in the church of Naso, a village six miles distant, she has always returned by herself to the Cape, and it is useless to attempt to place her elsewhere.

The wind fell at noon, and at two we again launched upon the main, though the waves still ran high. At midnight we got off Cefalù, a small city on a rocky cape, and fifty miles from Cape Orlando. The country is fine and very productive, the mountains rise with a slope from the sea, and are covered with wood and verdure. The little city of St. Marco crowns the rocky summit of a high mountain in a singular manner, and presents a very picturesque *coup d'œil*. The men were obliged to row incessantly during the night, as the wind, which was fresh, was quite contrary. At a little after sun-rise the following morning

we passed Termini, a city that looks very neat from the sea, and is celebrated for its grapes, which are sent fresh to Naples, Messina, and Palermo, and bought up with such amazing avidity, that it is almost impossible to meet with a single bunch half an hour after their arrival; at market they are of that species called the white sweet water, like those of the Pays de Vaud in appearance, but more rich in their flavour.

We scudded along at the rate of ten miles an hour, and doubled the high mountain called Cape Reale, projecting boldly into the sea, and with its rocky walls seems to bid defiance to the power of that element. It is only nine miles from Palermo, and you enjoy a fine prospect of the mountains behind that city. We contended with the waves till one o'clock, when we entered the little port of Palermo, calculated only for light vessels, and about a mile and a half from the Great Port. I obtained permission from the Health Office

to land, which is commonly called *Pratique*, without any difficulty; my papers only were taken into custody to be examined, and returned to me if found to contain nothing treasonable. I put up at the French inn, kept by a woman, who exactly answers the description of Brydone's hostess, when he visited Palermo, and I concluded that the present landlady must be the same, until upon enquiry I found that she had been dead several years, and the one now occupying her situation is her sister, who must have been about twenty-five when that traveller was here. She too is married to a stupid fellow like an idiot, and has a tongue that never ceases plaguing me. I can hardly chase her from my chamber, as she is extremely attached to a French chit chat, not having entirely forgotten her native language. Upon asking her for clean sheets, she looked at me with an air of dignity, and answered pertly, *Je ne suis pas Cochon, moi, je ne suis point Sicilienne, je viens de Paris.* This I thought



a very ridiculous phrase from the mouth of the dirtiest woman I ever met with. The most miserable villages of the Alps cannot I believe produce her equal. The inn is, if possible, worse than herself. The scene which I beheld upon entering it, was undescribably bad. My chamber has a floor of tiles which has never been washed. There is a window, but without any glass, so that I am reduced to the necessity of either keeping the shutters open, and being exposed to the heat of the sun, or of sitting in the dark. Add to this a situation in the shabbiest, dirtiest street in Palermo, or perhaps in Europe, and just opposite a gloomy prison, where every time I go out upon the balcony my eyes are regaled with the sight of a number of miserable wretches thrusting their hands through the unrelenting bars of their cells, to ask for charity. The union of these horrors gave me at first such a disgust for Palermo, that I would have paid all the money which remained in my pocket to have embarked directly

for Naples, but my tone soon changed, when I walked out and began to reconnoitre the other parts of the city; and as you have now partaken of the hardships of my voyage, I will endeavour to entertain you in my next with a description of this capital, which I think will afford me something interesting to communicate to you, and repay me for my trouble.

I remain, &c. &c.

LETTER XVI.

Palermo, 18th November.

THE subject of my present letter will be to give you a rough sketch of the situation, and a general description of this city, reserving any particular objects of notice for following letters wherein I shall give you a detail of whatever may claim any attention. Palermo is situated almost in the center of an extensive bay, beneath a chain of high mountains, which, rising at a little distance from the sea, leave a fruitful plain, whereon the city is built. These mountains are unproductive of every kind of trees, but are covered with a mossy verdure and short grass, up to their summit. The plain beneath them is a most enchanting garden, producing all the luxuriant fruits of southern climates in their highest state of perfection, and enamelled, if I may use the expression, with convents, churches, and country seats. The summits of the

mountains terminate generally in a bare rock of a reddish tint, which when gilded by the rays of the rising sun has a highly picturesque appearance. The general outline of the city is perfectly uniform. Two noble streets, each of about a mile and a half in length, cross one another from north to south, and from east to west, forming a small opening in the centre called the *quattro cautionsiere* or *ottanpla*, from its octangular form. This is decorated with edifices of an elegant but rather antique style of architecture, ornamented with statues of Flora, Ceres, and Pomona, and of several Sicilian kings with arms and inscriptions. The four streets which run from this common center are perfectly strait, about twenty yards broad, and very well paved with large hewn stones. The houses are not uniform as to structure or size, but generally present a noble front to the street, ornamented with columns, cornices, and statues. The ground floor consists in open shops, which, when decorated in an attrac-

tive manner to allure the country people have a very lively effect. There are balconies before each window, and the attics of several houses which belong to nunneries in the neighbourhood are cased up with Chinese work, from whence the fair prisoners gaze upon the busy world below, and no doubt often sigh to mix with it.

From day-light till the heat of the day commences, that is, when the sun begins to culminate, and there is no shade in the streets, the noise and bustle is astonishing. I do not recollect to have met with any thing equal to it either in London, Vienna, or Naples. At that period the streets seem to be the fixed place of rendezvous for all the lower orders of society. The quantity of fruit-stalls is innumerable, and the women and boys walking up and down with pomegranates, olives, medlars, oranges, pistaccio-nuts, figs, and other fruits are equally so; all of them have such potent voices that

they never cease one minute to extol their merchandize with an intolerable, and almost deafening, bawl. To these you may add droves of country people with asses and mules, laden with all kinds of pot-herbs, crying out likewise in a manner which must affect the strongest nerves. At this time the sailors flock from the port to purchase provisions. The police officers, secretaries, clerks, and apprentices, hasten to their daily occupations, taking their breakfast on the road, which consists in some bread or biscuit, and a little fresh fruit just gathered in the neighbouring gardens, and covered with a luxuriant bloom.

At noon, when the market of the morning is over, the streets begin to fill with carriages, sedans, monks, and priests. The scene becomes almost as busy as the former. There being no paths for foot passengers as in our towns in England, the people are obliged to walk upon the carriage road, and it is rather surprising that

an accident seldom happens although the carriages are driven through the streets with astonishing velocity. The number of them is very great in proportion to the size of the city; the poorest of the nobility keep three or four, and part of their richer brethren are not content with a dozen, but often exceed that number. There are some few good horses, but mules are the beasts most commonly in use, and these, which are originally of the Spanish breed, are active, powerful, and sure footed. To draw a concise picture of this bustle, imagine upwards of 200,000 souls inhabiting a space of ground, only five miles in circumference, and add to these the throngs of peasants, which spend the day in the city, and return to their cottages in the evening.

The necessities of life are much cheaper here than in Italy, and the luxuries may be more easily supported in this capital than at Naples. For this reason an immense train of nobility reside here and

œconomise their narrow incomes, who would hardly be able to keep a carriage at Naples. Their court is held at the viceroy's palace, and being less brilliant than that of a monarch its attendants are not spurred on by pride to vie with one another in their attire or equipages. The city is blessed with a continual and copious supply of clear water, conducted in pipes from the adjacent mountains. This is the first luxury in a warm climate, but which is wanting in many parts of Italy. Snow too abounds here, and in case of a very mild winter it is brought from Mount Etna, which supplies all Sicily, Malta, and part of Calabria, and according to Brydone, yielded an annual revenue to the Bishop of Catania of £.10,000. Nature seems to have poured out her gifts upon Palermo without denying its inhabitants any thing which might tend to make them happy ; but these, regardless, and almost insensible of her bounty, live like as many brutes without other desires than to

eat and drink. There appears to be no emulation within their breasts. The miserable peasant, though blessed with Herculean force, will plod on in his misery and die almost as naked as he entered the world. The lower class is more ignorant, superstitious, treacherous, idle, and dirty than any people I ever met with. The mildness of the climate, and the richness of the soil, yields them almost every necessary of life, without that incessant labour which the poor of northern climates are obliged to practise to maintain themselves. Still their habitations are wretched, and contain an accumulation of every species of filth. The nobility, excepting some few, are ruined for want of employment in their state. They have no diets, no parliaments to rouse their emulation and abilities. They are born with titles, and with a moderate income. Idleness, and a want of a liberal education, prevent them from signalizing themselves in any

manner, except in forming the most romantic plans and deepest intrigues, which they will carry on with unceasing ardour, and at the peril of their lives, till their object is accomplished. The situation of this capital, and the few visits that are paid to it by the people of rank of other countries, prevent it from participating in the gradual improvement which takes place in almost every other country, and many ancient abuses, both in religion and government, are not yet abolished which exist in few other countries, Spain and Portugal perhaps excepted. If it was not for the greater part of the shops being shut, it would be difficult to ascertain which day out of the seven is appointed for the more particular observance of the Sabbath. The cries are incessant, the trade brisk, and the populace full as unruly and disorderly as upon a market day. They generally go to mass at sun-rise, or soon after, and think no more of religion for the rest of the day. Pleasure is their only object. The evenings

are dedicated to revelry, riot, and play-houses.

I met with a strong instance of vanity in a woman to whom I was first introduced in her box at the Opera House, where she was environed by young ladies. There was one amongst them whom she called sister, a girl about fifteen. It struck me, that this must be a finesse of polite life, and I found out after some time, that she is her daughter. Thus you see it suits the convenience of mothers sometimes to disown their children, but this is a foolish method of disguising age, as the face will generally detect what the mouth denies.

The form and decorations of the Opera House of St. Cecilia are neat and simple; it is of an oval shape, containing a pit, with fifteen rows of benches, and four stories of boxes, of which there are thirteen in each story. The number of the whole including sixteen stage boxes, is about sixty four. This

house will contain near eight hundred people, and although small, it is never full, as the middling and lower classes have no taste for the opera. This is not to be wondered at, for to one who is neither amateur nor connoisseur of singing, this kind of performance must appear a mere medley of dresses and signs, both preposterous and unmeaning; it is therefore natural, that the lower orders of society should frequent other places of evening amusement, and receive no pleasure from an opera. Before I was as well acquainted with the nature of this performance as I am at present, I was rather surprized at finding the finest Opera houses in Italy without galleries, or any place for the immediate reception of the labouring class of mankind, who are so fond of finishing their day in a theatre; but upon inspecting into the cause of this apparent seclusion of them from an entertainment so generally in vogue, I find it arises from their disinclination to partake of it. The only end or pur-

pose of an opera is to encourage luxury, whereas a play has always some effect upon the mind, and may be made the instrument of instruction, which can hardly be the case with an opera. Cards were played, refreshments were handed about in most of the boxes, and the company seemed quite regardless of what was going forward on the stage. I have seen so many of Metastasio's opera's in Italy, that I find the paltry productions of most of the modern writers very insipid, and can seldom fix my attention through the first act.

The heat of the climate induces the higher ranks of society to reverse the order of nature, by using the night in the same manner in which the day is employed in northern countries. The Opera does not commence till nine o'clock, and ends at midnight, when it is customary to drive out for an airing, take a walk, sup, or pay visits. When the sun begins to spread its influence

over nature, they retire to rest. This mode of living may, in some measure, account for the fair complexions of the Sicilian ladies, although they are born in a country where the sun has so much power, that it has almost converted me into a negro in the space of a few weeks.

I have this morning accompanied the chevalier A. G. to Monreale, a small city about five miles south of Palermo, situated upon an eminence, whence it commands a very grand and varied prospect. The road for about three miles is quite strait; on each side of it is a chain of neat country houses and convents, the former with their balconies and gateways resemble little palaces, and the latter are of an immense size and noble appearance. There are also several beautiful seats of the nobility, which are elegantly built and painted. We next ascended a zigzag road, cut on the side of a steep rock, and ornamented with statues, inscriptions, and cooling fountains

of crystal water, which never cease to flow. The valley beneath, about three miles broad, is an orchard of orange, olive, fig, and other fruit trees. The innumerable quantity of country-houses, the rich and velvet look of the sombre verdure of the orange trees, and the still richer tint of their ripened fruit, the harmony produced in the whole scene by the varied garment of autumn, the contrast formed by the high and sterile mountains which encompass the valley on three sides, the majestic appearance of the city, port, and suburbs, and the unbounded view of the sea, and smoking summit of Stromboli in the distant horizon, form a combination of objects, calculated to enchant the senses. I often wish you could enjoy these scenes with me, that we could ascend the bold rocks, or wander together amongst groves of orange-trees, loaded with luxuriant fruit, which seemingly invite you to gather them, as if to ease them of their burden.

You will think me strangely infatuated with Sicily, but if you could transport yourself hither, you would see that it is not without reason, that I am so much pleased with the natural beauties in which it abounds. We walked about Mon Reale, but met with nothing remarkable except its cathedral, a large gothic edifice, built by William the Second, king of Sicily, about the year 1175, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary, by permission of Pope Alexander the Third. Its interior walls are adorned with fine mosaics, descriptive of the most striking parts of the Old and New Testament, and the roof is supported by some grand columns of Egyptian granite. Having been for several centuries the sepulchre of the kings of Sicily and their families, there are many antique monuments, of porphyry, granite, and marble, which are worth attention, on account of the quality of the stone, and the sculpture and design of the Sarcophagi. Monreale is now

united to the see of Palermo, but had formerly an Archbishop of its own, when the monarchs of this island resided here; upon the union of this crown with that of Spain, the Court left Palermo, and I suppose the want of patronization and nobles impoverished the See of Monreale so considerably, that it was not able any longer to maintain a separate Archbishop. The city may contain about ten thousand souls, who mostly earn their bread at Palermo; there are likewise some convents, which serve to drain the neighbourhood of its dainties. I should suppose the situation of this city to be as salubrious as that of any place in Europe. It is about five miles from the sea, the intermediate country is highly cultivated, it lies upon an eminence almost surrounded by high mountains, whence there is a continual current of fresh air, and there is no marshy land or stagnant water within many miles of it. This combination of all that is required to constitute a

healthy situation, makes me conclude, that it would be a very desirable spot of retirement for a valetudinarian, and preferable to any I have yet seen. I will lay by my pen for the present to resume it to-morrow, flattering myself with the idea, that my endeavours to entertain you will not be unprofitable. Till then,

I remain, &c. &c.

LETTER XVII.

Palermo, 19th. November.

YESTERDAY afternoon I strolled upon the Marino; the gate which leads to it is called la Porta Felice, at the southern end of the chief street, termed il Corso; it is of noble architecture, and adorned with statues and eagles of white marble, the eagles forming part of the arms of the city. The Marino is a terrace about fifty yards broad, running along the sea-side for near a mile, and used as a walk or drive for all classes of people. At the present season of the year the carriages of the nobility are very numerous; they parade up and down the Marino from six o'clock till sun-set, when they retire to prepare for the Opera, or other amusements of the evening. But it is in summer that this walk is most frequented, and particularly about midnight, when all the torches are extinguished at Porta Felice, the better to favor the pur-

suits of love and intrigues. A band of music is placed in a neat little orchestra of marble pillars, near the centre of the walk. Soft tunes awaken the soul to tenderness, the gentle murmuring of the waves lulls it into love, the hour, the situation are favorable, and hearts not made of stone can hardly avoid catching the flame.

Near the end of the Marino is a delightful garden called the Villa Giulia. It was dedicated to public use by the Senate in the year 1788, and is still more adapted to encourage the tender passion than the Marino. Here no carriages disturb the gentle whispers of a tête à tête; you walk under groves of orange and lemon trees, whose fragrant odour cannot fail to please, whilst the thick foliage serves as an impenetrable rampart against the intrusions of the sly moon. There is nothing to betray the secrets of love, Cupid governs as absolute monarch, and seems to have fixed his throne in this bewitching spot, among the crystal fountains, and orange groves. The

garden is adorned with marble busts, statues, bird cages, and small summer-houses, which serve as places of resort in case of rain. Leaving these scenes, I continued my walk about two miles and a half westward to the light-house to see the port. The suburbs which I passed through are very wretched, and chiefly inhabited by fishermen; they contain some spacious magazines and storehouses, and two or three large private edifices. The port is not near so commodious or safe, as either that of Messina or Syracuse, but is adapted to the commerce of the place, which at present appears very insignificant. The whole number of merchant vessels lying there at anchor may be about fifty. They are most of them deeply laden with flour, for the supply of the Neapolitan army now encamped beyond Rome. There are likewise two Spanish men of war and a frigate, that have lain here eight months. They brought a very rich cargo of quicksilver from the mines of Idria, and were

destined to sail directly to the gulph of Mexico, but the arrival of the English fleet in the Mediterranean compelled them to take refuge in Palermo, whence they have sent their cargo to Carthagená in small vessels, and will remain themselves until the peace, for they would find it difficult to get to Spain during the war, as our ships have watched them very narrowly, and still continue to do so.

The Chevalier A. G. and myself drove to the Bagaria this morning, about nine miles out of town. The road goes through a flat country, very well cultivated, and producing several kinds of fruit, and other vegetables in great perfection. It is hedged by aloes, mostly in flower, which have a pretty appearance as you drive between them. The Bagaria is the most singular spot of ground I ever beheld. Imagine a plain not more than ten miles in circumference, bounded on the east and west by the sea, and on the north and south by two mountains; sterile by nature, being covered

with a reddish sandy soil, and ornamented with large palaces, placed about two hundred yards from each other, and not adorned by any kind of verdure, except small French gardens inclosed with high walls. Any one of these palaces would grace an English park, but they seem placed here by magic, without any taste whatsoever. There are about fifteen of them, all of a different style of architecture, and fantastically painted. You may easily conceive how much this scene must strike an Englishman, who fancies his park, shrubbery, or garden, the greatest ornament of his country seat, and who would rather live in a neat cottage built in a garden, than in a palace on a desert. Although there is a great variety of buildings in the Bagaria, there is not one which may be considered as a model of taste in regard to its architecture; and the interiors, though adorned with the choicest ornaments, exhibit a scene of confusion and dirt. Many of their possessors are either too poor, or too much addicted to the ruinous vice of gambling, to be able to support

the expence of two sets of furniture, so that they bring it from the city when wanted; and in several of these immense palaces, belonging to the first princes in the island there are no beds. What a contrast do these vast edifices form with the neat and compact villa's of our nobility and gentry, where every thing is to be found which can be conducive to the comfort of their inhabitants.

The palace of the Prince of Palagonia, renowned as a composition of ridicule and monsters, is still very curious, though by no means equal to what it was when Brydone was here. That author says, that the incessant complaints of the ladies against the terrific appearance of the preposterous statues which surrounded it, induced the successor of the late Prince, the original founder of this collection of oddities, to take down all those statues which were near the road, and leave those only standing near the palace. It is rather to be regretted, that

he should have been so weak as to be prevailed upon to destroy one of the finest originals of ridicule that ever existed. The late Prince, who was half an idiot, (which is easily to be perceived by the traits of his features in an excellent portrait, upon the wall of one of the rooms) spent all his time and money in collecting every thing that was preposterous and uncommon. He paid very handsomely for every monster of a figure that was brought to him, and gave the most frightful statues the choicest place in his palace. The little which still remains, conveys some idea of the ancient state of this repository of oddities. The walls of some of the rooms are covered with blue and white cut glasses, and the cielings are of mirrors. The marble statues and stairs are of porphyry, and still retain some elegance, though in a state of ruin. In a few years there will be nothing remaining to attract the notice of travellers, and no traces left of one of the most singular characters that ever existed.

The palace of the Prince of Valguernera is the handsomest building in the Bagaria, and there are some hedges of myrtles in the gardens which are pleasing to the eye. We took a drive round about to see the church of St. Flavia, built in the style of St. Peter's, and neatly ornamented with modern paintings and statues.

You will be rather surprised when I inform you that the generality of the female sex in this climate is at a state of maturity at twelve years of age, and they frequently marry at that time, and sometimes even a little younger. It is the custom, or rather the interest, of the nobility to marry young in most countries, for the sake of family connections; but here it is common amongst the lower orders of society, and the age of fifteen may correspond with that of twenty-five in northern climates. In a country where education is badly attended to, and where religion has little influence or restraint over the minds or actions of mankind, how can marriage be considered

as a state of happiness? How is it probable that the affections of a child can be fixed to one object, when it has no reason to guide them? It is not surprising, or even unnatural, that, under such circumstances, marriage should become a heavy burden, that the wedded should seek variety, and that their breasts should be open to every illicit passion. If nature has so ordained it that man and woman shall come to maturity at an earlier age in warm climates than in cold ones, it is incumbent upon the religion and government of the country to exert themselves in remedying that evil (for such it may be termed in the present state of society) by bestowing all possible pains upon the education, and preparing the young mind for the part which it is to act in life. What prudence in the management of her affairs, or in the conduct of her own person, can we look for in a mother of fourteen? How can she be expected to lead that regular life which it is the duty of a mother to lead? Uncon-

trouled by any one, and least of all by her own reason, will she not resort to every place of mirth, keep late hours, and destroy her constitution with unwholesome food? Her offspring will be weak and puny, and herself an old woman at thirty years of age. The state of matrimony in Italy, and other warm climates, would be far more happy if the solemn vow was not to be made till both sexes had fixed their stature, and finished their education. We should not witness so much jealousy, envy, rage, misery, ruin, and assassination if the parties had more consideration in the choice of their companion in life. It is between thirteen and eighteen that a female mind delights in the Belles Letters, before that age her capacity cannot comprehend the maxims either of religion or morality. When she ought to become a student she becomes a mother, and how can her mind be furnished with sufficient knowledge to direct her conduct. The avocations of the wedded state, the plea-

sures of the world, and a variety of trifling occupations will naturally divert her weak mind from every kind of study until youth be fled, and the age arrived when she has no zest for knowledge; but for the sake of employment she will pass the remainder of her days in intrigues, setting a shocking example to her children, and rendering herself, her husband, and other families unhappy through life.

Excuse this digression of your's, &c. &c.

LETTER XVIII.

Palermo, 21st November.

I BEGIN now to look with anxiety towards Naples, but fear that I shall be detained here a week or ten days longer, waiting for a convoy which is to convey a regiment of cavalry and a quantity of flour to Naples. It is said, that the king has broken the treaty of peace and marched his troops to Rome; I am afraid that he cannot long resist the artful designs and depredating armies of the French, and ere many months be passed we shall see them triumphant in the magnificent city of Naples. I expect there will be a revolution in that country even more distressing than that which I witnessed in Switzerland, and my plan of residing peaceably in Naples until spring must I fear be laid aside. It is necessary for me to reflect upon my situation, and in case any thing unpleasant should happen I will endeavour to extricate my-

self as well as possible. It often grieves me to think upon the anxiety which you must be under for my welfare amidst all these troubles, and upon the outskirts of Europe; but I trust myself to the care of Providence, with confidence. This letter will be a medley of different subjects, as there is little more in Palermo worth notice.

My friend, the chevalier, related the story of an affair to me which took place here a few days before my arrival. It will help to convince you of the want of education in the higher orders of society, and of some of their passions being as unrestrained as in a state of nature; and you will see in a stronger light the depravity of their minds, when I inform you that similar circumstances happen almost every month. Don Tomaso C—l—na, son of the Duke of G—t—no, is the hero of the tale. He is a handsome young man, whose appearance would belie the weakness of his mind. He professed the most ardent love for the princess of la P—t—la, a young woman, who was

considered the belle of Palermo. She had been married but very few months, and Don Tomaso could not exist for one day if he did not behold the object of his affection. He accompanied her every where, and in short payed her all those attentions which it is the duty of an affectionate husband to pay to his consort, but which the prince neglected, being engaged in numerous affairs of love, gambling, and intrigues. Susceptible to every look, and almost penetrating into the thoughts of the princess, Don Tomaso fancied that he observed something cool in her actions which led him to suspect her fidelity towards him. His imagination roused itself to a pitch bordering upon madness, and his suspicion increased with every moment, he burnt with rage, and uncontrolled by morality or reason, he resolved in the space of a very few hours to be revenged. The ways of effecting this were various, but Don Tomaso hit upon one entirely novel. He treated the princess as if she had been a school-

boy, with whom he had quarrelled. Having devised the method, the means soon presented themselves. He stopped the princess's carriage at midnight as she was returning from the opera, jumped into it, and both with his fists and a cane he beat her in a violent manner, and then ran off. The prince upon being informed of the affair did not either challenge or cause Don Tomaso to be assassinated; he only made a report of his conduct to the viceroy, who ordered him to be imprisoned. The viceroy is an intimate friend of the Duke of G—t—no, and will no doubt soon release his valiant son. A similar affair happened a few months ago at Florence, and were I to collect all the anecdotes which I have heard relating to love and intrigues, I should be able to fill a folio volume.

I have been introduced to our consul general, who is so much respected for

his upright conduct, that the viceroy and consuls of other nations, whether friends or enemies, consult with him upon affairs of the greatest moment, and his judgment and justice in his decisions, together with his love for the honour of his country, are truly exemplary. He lives in a neat house which he has built on the road to Monreale, where he is happy to enjoy the society of his countrymen, and render them as comfortable as lies in his power. On the 22d the guns of the citadel were fired, both morning and evening, for the happy delivery of the princess hereditary of a daughter. The viceroy's palace and the theatres were illuminated. The archbishop and other public characters, in the service of government, hung out portraits of the king and queen badly painted upon their balconies, and placed a few wax tapers before them. The viceroy did not appear at the theatre, therefore the ladies were not in gala dresses. You would have been

struck at seeing several of the first female nobility sitting in the front of their boxes and eating a kind of common soup made of bread, ham, cheese and herbs; after this, they drank several glasses of red wine.

The police of this city is very bad; it is unsafe to walk even in the public streets after 8 or 9 o'clock, although they are patrolled by parties of soldiers. A number of those belonging to the regiment of cavalry, which is going to Naples, seem determined to plunder as much as they can before they leave the island. They rob houses, shops, and persons; and although several have been taken up, still they continue to act so desperately that eight of them attacked fifty constables, shot their leader, wounded two others, and drove the rest away. These men, like most banditti who are in parties, never injure the person they rob, unless he resists, and then they will

not spare him. The sirocco still blows, and the weather is cloudy and wet. I have not been able to take many walks into the country, but have confined myself to my wretched chamber, enjoying the amusements of drawing and thinking of you.

I remain, &c.

LETTER XIX.

Palermo, 29th. November.

THE anxiety which you must be under on my account, induces me once more to address you from hence, although I am fearful I shall not be able to amuse you. The weather has continued quite unfavorable for my rambles in the country; I have visited the Opera for an hour or two every evening, having free admission to the manager's box, where I meet a party of seven or eight, which makes a little variety to my lonely life. The Viceroy attended one of the churches on the 23d, where the Te Deum was performed in all the pomp of the Catholic religion, on account of the birth of the Princess at Caserta. The procession to the church was far more magnificent and splendid than I could have expected; the elegant carriages of the nobility were drawn by four and six horses, preceded and followed by several

running footmen, lacqueys, &c. dressed in all the pageantry which is used on such occasions. Three large gilt coaches and six preceded the Viceroy, who came in one of those immense vehicles of glass, called coaches by our forefathers; a regiment of cavalry brought up the rear, and a regiment of infantry drawn up before the entrance of the church, fired volleys at intervals. There would hardly have been room for another person, the church was so excessively crowded, although very spacious. The music was harmonious in the greatest degree, and exceedingly grand. The whole formed a scene worthy the attention of a foreigner, and I am much gratified in having been present at this ceremony, although it is not equal to many processions which I have seen upon the Continent.

The number of churches in Palermo exceeds that of any town which I have ever seen. Wherever you stop to gaze around you for a moment, your eye meets with four or five of them, and the ringing of bells

continually assails your ears. Some of these edifices are very magnificent, particularly that of St. Joseph, whose roof is supported by thirty-four very large Ionic pillars of grey marble, with white bases and capitals. The altar is of agate, marble, and lapis lazuli, curiously inlaid and finely polished; but this, like the generality of Italian and Sicilian buildings, is not quite compleated; the pavement is of brick, though it was intended to be of marble. A traveller will find this to be the case throughout all Italy, St. Peter's is not quite compleated, nor are any of the superb public buildings either at Naples, Messina, Catania, or Palermo. The designs are noble, but the eyes of the undertakers have outreached their purses.

I went to the Consul's in the afternoon, and met there the Duke and Duchess of F. with a son of the Prince of P. who were come to see the Consul's telescopes and electrifying machine. The Duchess is a charming little woman, daughter of

the Chevalier Giueni of Catania, descended from the Dukes of Anjou, whose museum I have mentioned in my letter from that place. The Duke has little to say for himself, and is rather addicted to jealousy, perhaps not without reason. This couple were attached to each other six years before they were united in wedlock. The prince of F. father of the Duke, disapproved of the match, as being ignominious to his family, and would never give his consent to it. The Chevalier married them at last at Catania, and the Prince disinherited his son. The son and daughter-in-law repaired immediately to Palermo, represented the affair in a Court of Justice, which, from what authority I could not learn, ordered the Prince to pay £.6000 sterling to the couple for the expences of the wedding, and to continue to pay them a pension of £.1000 per month, until he should take his son again into favor. The Duchess is very partial to England, and says she will go there when peace is made; I have given her an invi-

tation to spend a week at our house, which she said she should accept of if her wish can be accomplished.

On the 24th I walked to an old Saracen palace belonging to the Prince of Castelleale; it is a spacious building, very high, of a quadrangular form, and of a purer and plainer style of architecture than was commonly used among the Saracens when they over-ran the south of Europe. It is called Tisa, and served as a summer residence for a king of that name in about the year 1326, when Palermo was taken by the infidels, and made their capital; there are ten or eleven other fine edifices of the same nature in the city, which are now modernised and converted into palaces for the nobility. On my return home I attended mass in the viceroy's chapel, a small antique building, whose interior walls are entirely covered with mosaics, like the cathedral of Monreale, but one of these representing a boar hunt, seemed to me but little adapted to adorn a place of worship.

The church of the nunnery of St. Catherine is entirely of inlaid marble of many colours and bas reliefs, representing the stories of sacred history ; but though the appearance of the whole is very rich and splendid, still it looks confused, and appears to have no other merit than that of the choice of the colours of the marble, and the manner in which it is inlaid.

The long wished for convoy which is to convey me to Naples is entering the port. I am going to the Consul's for my passport to quit this island, where I have spent near forty days in a satisfactory and instructive manner.

Farewell for the present ; my next will be from Naples, should I not be carried into Tunis. Providence will, I hope, soon guide me to my native country, and to the arms of my friends ; this believe me, is the most ardent wish of

Your's, &c. &c.

The author arrived safe at Naples on the 6th of December 1798, but met with nothing worthy communication, as the objects in view were the same as are already described in the voyage to Messina.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The author of this work has been
for many years a student of the
history of the United States, and
has been particularly interested in
the history of the Southern States.
He has been particularly interested
in the history of the Southern States
because of the importance of the
Southern States in the history of
the United States.

The author arrived late at Naples on
the 6th of December 1793, but not with
nothing worthy communication, as the objects
in view were the same as are already de-
scribed in the voyage to Sicily.

The author has been particularly
interested in the history of the
Southern States because of the
importance of the Southern States
in the history of the United States.
He has been particularly interested
in the history of the Southern States
because of the importance of the
Southern States in the history of
the United States.

NOTES.

AN English traveller to the south of Europe and the Holy Land in 1610, gives an interesting description of the Island of Capri, which I have transcribed for the amusement of my readers.

“Capra is an island small and rocky, having no haven, nor convenient station. But the ayre is there mild, even during the winter; being defended from the bitter north by the Surrentine mountains, and by the west wind, to which it lies open, refreshed in the summer: possessing on all sides the pleasure of the sea, and the delicate prospects of Vesuvius, Naples, Cuma, and the adjoining ilands. The Theloboans did first inhabite it, so called of Thelon, the father of Oebalus:

Nec tu carminibus nostris indictus abibis,

Oebale, quem generasse Thelon Sebethide

Nympha.

Pertur, Theloboum Capreas cum regna teneret,

Jam senior —

VIRG. ÆN. lib. vii.

Nor shall our verse thee Oebalus forget,

Whom the nymphs Sebethis to Thelon bore:

Thelon then old the crowne of Capra wore,

And Theloboans rul'd—

who were originally of Samus. But when Augustus Cæsar came into these parts, it was inhabited by Grecians; and because an old saplesse tree did flourish afresh upon his landing in the island, he would needs have it of the Neapolitans, in exchange of Ænaria: which from henceforth he variously beautified, and honoured with his retirements. But Tyberius made Capra by his cruelty and lusts, both infat-

mous and unhappy: who hither withdrawing from the affaires of the Common-wealth, (for that the iland was unaccessable on all sides by reason of the upright cliffs, except onely at one place, no man being suffered to land but upon especiall admittance) hence sent his mandates of death. In the mean time making it a very stew of incredible beastliness, which modesty will not suffer to relate. In so much that Capra was stiled the Iland of Secret Lusts, and he Capreneus. His usuall companions were magicians and sooth-sayers: whereof the satyre speaking of Sejanus,

Tutor haberi

Principis augusta Caprearum in rupe sendentis.

Cum grege Chaldaeo. —

JUVEN. Sat. x.

The Prince's tutor glorying to be nam'd,

Sitting in caves of Capra with defamed

Chaldaeans. —

The principal of these was Thrasyllus; whom Tiberius intending on a time to thrust downe from the cliffe, as they walked together, in that he had failed in a former prediction, and perceiving by his lookes that he was troubled in his mind, demanded the cause: who replied, that by his art he foresaw some hardly to be avoyded danger to be neere him: whereat Tiberius amazed altered his purpose. Unto this iland they used to confine offenders, a custome that continues to this day. Amongst other grots here is one that hath an entrance very obscure, but leades into a lightsome cave: exceeding pleasant, by reason of the water dropping from on high. About the shore there are divers ruines, sufficient witnesses of the Roman magnificency. Here is a little city (whereof there is a Bishop) of the name of the iland, having a strong fortresse, so seated that by one alone it may be defended.

THE points in dispute between the Volcanists and Neptunists, may be reduced into the following six-heads, which I think calculated to explain the different grounds, upon which the abettors of each hypothesis found their creed.

Volcanists.

1st. The earth was in the beginning a *red hot mass*, which grew cool by degrees; it was afterwards overflowed by water.

2d. The dry land was *raised* above the surface of the sea by an *inward power*; thus the power worked from *within outwards*, and the circumference of the earth was by that means *enlarged*.

3d. The effecting power (*causa efficiens*) was air and *fire*.

4th. The land dried *gradually*.

5th. The irregularities in the strata of the mountains arise from *earthquakes* and *volcanic eruptions*.

6th. The alluvial or secondary mountains were produced from the *ruins* and *destruction* of the primary mountains, and contain *no* marine animals.

Neptunists.

1st. The earth was in the beginning a *cold mass* encompassed by water, in which the solid parts formed themselves by sediment.

2d. The dry land arose from the *recession* of the sea into the hollowed parts of the earth; thus the power worked from *without inwards*, and the surface of the earth was *diminished*.

3d. The effecting power (*causa efficiens*) was air and *water*.

4th. The sea *suddenly* withdrew from the land.

5th. The irregularities in the strata arise from the *natural giving way* of the earth.

6th. The alluvial mountains were formed, stratified, and sunk into irregularities, as *sediment of the sea*, and contain marine productions.

* FOR the entertainment of my readers, I have annexed the following letter, written to my friends from Sienna, immediately after the earthquake alluded to.

Sunday 27th May, 1798. . . Written at the Villa of the Marchioness Z. two miles from Sienna on the road to Florence.

I cannot delay a single post to inform you of the dreadful danger to which I have been exposed, by the most awful event which can happen upon the surface of the globe, and to beg that your thanksgivings in union with my own, may be offered up to the Almighty, for his gracious preservance of the lives of so many of his creatures, who were upon the verge of eternity. You will have observed, that in preceding letters I have made mention of the unusual appearances in the heavens, attended with very unsettled weather. Yesterday afternoon at ten minutes past one o'clock, the most terrible earthquake took place that was ever felt in Sienna. I was writing in my room, and a friend and a servant were in the apartment, when the most violent and reverberatory motion almost overset my chair, and threw the servant entirely down, affecting us for a moment like a slight electric shock. This dreadful convulsion of nature lasted during thirty seconds, without intermitting from the violence with which it commenced. A tremendous noise issued from the bowels of the earth, to which was added the rattling of the furniture around us, and the cracking of the walls. It did not strike either of us at the beginning that what we felt was an earthquake, but ere many seconds had elapsed, that idea entered into my mind, and I called out loudly, Run, Run, upon which we hurried off through our suit of apartments towards the street. The nearest objects were for a few minutes concealed from my sight by clouds of dust, occasioned by the falling chimneys and cornices which bestrewed the street. The

affrighted inhabitants rushed from their houses, speechless and pale, but soon broke out in the most bitter lamentations, uttering incoherent prayers, and proceeding *as by instinct* towards the churches. A croud assembled round a poor mortal who had been thrown from a scaffolding close to the gateway of the inn, and who, dreadfully mutilated, lay wallowing in his blood. When I was sufficiently collected to call to mind the improbability of a second shock following the first in immediate succession, (which is seldom the case) I returned into the apartments, which I found in a deplorable condition. The floors were cracked in lines all across the rooms; the windows were distorted and twisted into a diagonal shape, so as to render it impossible for us to open them: the key stones, and those of the doors likewise were split in twain, and the separations at the corners of an outward wall were so wide, that I could see the light through the crevices at each side of the angle. The sight of these objects, and the state of insecurity in which I found myself, entirely deprived me of the little philosophy the earthquake had left me. The moment was replete with horror; I followed the multitude to the Lizza, (a public walk) where a vast concourse of fugitives was speedily assembled together, whose countenances were strongly marked by the feelings of their hearts. Religion seemed to be their chief resource; a series of Paternosters and Ave Maria's were muttered from every mouth, accompanied by frequent beating of the breast, and making signs of the cross. Happy they, who can fly to this infallible resource in a moment so pregnant with distress! It is then that the most bigoted Catholic is happier than the wisest philosopher. I observed that tents were pitched upon the Lizza, and the inhabitants seemed disposed to remain there during the night; a plan which at

first appeared to me very pusillanimous, as I knew that the greater part of their houses could not be rendered entirely uninhabitable, but experience, as you shall hear, convinced me to the contrary.

At three o'clock my English companion and myself felt that our usual hour for dining was past, we summoned up our resolution, and returned to our tottering apartments. Upon enquiry, the chief part of the food which had been prepared for the day was not eatable, having been covered with mortar and soot from the chimney; a few remnants were however collected, and served up to us, and a bottle of Monte Pulciano wine had almost obliterated from our minds the scene of the morning, when at four o'clock a second shock drove us hastily from our chairs, and ere we had reached the staircase a third succeeded, which made us fully sensible of the imminent danger that surrounded us, when under the roof of a half-ruined house. The apertures of the walls were opened wider, and the beams creaked like those of a ship when labouring in a storm. We were now determined to fly into the country, where we might occasionally run into the open fields, and not be in dread of falling chimneys or cornices. We directed our steps to the villa of Lady S——, our most intimate friend, whom we found in the greatest distress, and lost in the agonies of grief. The cieling of an apartment in the College of Nobility fell upon twelve of the students, and fractured the limbs of several of them: amongst the rest Lady S——'s eldest son was left in a very dangerous state. He was brought into the country as the safest place, during the time we were at her villa; and I fear, although the most able surgeons attend him, that he must be a martyr to this unfortunate accident. The misery of the unfortunate mother penetrated the breast of a numerous train of nobility who came to offer their consolation, and the scene

acted so forcibly upon the spirits, that no one could refrain from shedding tears.

Judging that under such circumstances it might not be convenient for us to stay long at this villa, we returned once more towards the city. On the road we fell in with a Mr. G.—, an English gentleman, who has resided in Sienna during the last twenty-five years, and has built a neat country house after the manner of our nation, which, from being held together by large beams, did not suffer the smallest injury from the repeated shocks. Mr. G.— accompanied us to town, anxious to know whether a relation of his was amongst the number of nuns killed by the fall of the cupola, while adorning an altar in the church of their convent. We walked upon the Lizza until the dusk of the evening, when not without some fears, we re-occupied our apartments: but confiding in a good Providence, we sat communicating our thoughts until twilight gave way to darkness; we then called for candles, begging the servant who brought them to tread lightly across the apartments, such was the insecurity of our situation; and he had hardly placed them upon the table, when a fourth shock succeeded, which brought them to the ground. This happened at half past eight, and threw us into great alarm; wrapping ourselves up therefore in our great coats we hurried out of the city, undetermined where to seek refuge. You cannot conceive what satisfaction I felt upon finding myself in the open air, unsurrounded by walls and houses, which threatened to bury me alive. We finally resolved to beg a bed at our friend's the Marchioness Z, whose manifest hospitality and goodwill towards the English, induced us to seek an asylum at her delightful villa. We were kindly received amidst a numerous party of fugitives, whom we found at prayers, and with them we offered up our thanks to the Governor of the Universe for his preservation of us.

The Duke of Braschi, nephew to the Pope, and several other distinguished personages of the expatriated Romans were of the party. It was judged most expedient to pass the night in a spacious coach house, which was free from the smallest crevice, where we could all be together, for society was best calculated to afford alleviation to the mind under our mutual distress. Some mattresses were spread around it, and chairs and sophas introduced to make up the deficiency. A plenteous supper was served up, which, with good company and delicious wine, dispelled our fears, and made us less uneasy under the circumstances which had brought us together. Upon the removal of the table the ladies first chose their places of repose, and the gentlemen reclined upon the chairs and sophas, accommodating each other as much as they were able. Few eyes were closed till one o'clock, when sleep overcame the desire to converse, and an universal silence prevailed.

A little before seven o'clock in the morning, as my companion and myself were walking on the high road towards the city, whence we were anxious to remove our effects, we felt another slight shock, and distinctly heard a continuation of several sounds not unlike those of distant cannon during an engagement at sea. We found most of the houses in the city deserted, and the number of tents upon the Lizza much increased. There were upwards of fifty carriages which serve as habitations for the Nobles. Many hundreds of people are retiring into the country, conveying with them whatever they can. The churches being deemed unsafe places of resort, are shut up, and mass is performed in the open air.

I forgot to mention, that the poor old Pope had a very narrow escape from death at the first shock. He was in his apartment at a convent of Augustine Friars, and before the

shock had subsided, some monks conveyed him into the Corridores: just as he had left the room, the chair upon which he had been sitting for several hours, was covered with a mass of bricks and mortar. This was termed the *greatest of miracles*, and renders the venerable old man doubly holy in the eyes of his adherents. His Holiness, together with Odescalchi, formerly the Nuncio at Florence, were conducted to the Florentine tower, a palace belonging to Sig. Faustina S. a fine old lady of a very noble family.

The weather both yesterday and to-day has been oppressive, with intermitting showers, but no tendency to violent storms, the frequent followers of such convulsions. Another shock, as violent as the first, would raze Sienna to the ground; it is already rendered uninhabitable for the present. The college, churches, and other public buildings, are shut up, and much money must be expended upon them before they can be reinstated in their former condition. Some of the private houses, and the palaces in particular, are so thoroughly damaged, that in my opinion, the best plan would be to take them entirely down, and rebuild them upon a smaller scale. But the Sanese will only patch up the crevices, and unite the disjoined parts by a few iron bars; so that any subsequent shock must utterly destroy them; they console themselves with the idea, that a similar event will not take place during their lives, as upon searching the records of the city, it is found that these violent earthquakes only happen once in a century, which has hitherto been the case, and this appears a fixed period for the collecting of sufficient vapours and confined air to convulse the earth, when it endeavours to force a passage from its bowels. Not reposing great confidence in this supposition, I dread a repetition of what has already happened, and know not where this sad

disaster will end. I must now conclude my tale of woe, which I fear will distress your feelings, as much as it does my own in relating it. Do not encourage despair; under the eye of Providence I trust all will be well still.

Monday 28th. same Villa.

At one o'clock this morning we felt another shock, and at half past four another, which threw the whole coach house into confusion, being nearly as violent as the one of the 26th. Chevalier G——, whose beautiful wife was mistress to the G—— of S. and was at that time of our party, with two lovely babes, unmindful of this interesting groupe, ran out of the gates exclaiming, *Le mie Galline; Le mie Galline!* Oh my chickens, Oh my chickens! I naturally supposed that he meant his children, but the Marchioness informed me, that he alluded to some favorite bantams, and other rare fowls, which he had left at Sienna, and feared lest they were killed. I was informed, that he afterwards absolutely took them from the city in his carriage into the country, whither he retired with his lovely family! The motion of this shock being only undulatory, without any violent concussion, it occasioned no material damage to the city.

Yesterday evening we formed a party to the Lizza, which appeared like a vast camp of fugitives, and was it not for the misfortune which gave origin to this singular assemblage, it presented a *coup d'œil*, amusing rather than distressing. There was a mixture of rich and poor, rendered equal by mutual distress. Some of them were adjusting their garments, others cooking their food, and attending to their family occupations, as much as circumstances would allow. Tents, carriages, fires, and trees formed a chequered view, equally singular and new to me.

Upon an altar erected in the center of the Lizza, they have placed a painting of the Virgin Mary, with the child Jesus and St. John the Baptist. It was pretended, that before the earthquakes could cease and security be restored to the city, this picture of the Virgin must open its eyes and move its head. The priests informed the public, that this could only be effected by fervent prayers and bounteous donations; I was present during the feigned ceremony. The rich and poor, but more particularly the latter, passed in regular succession before the altar, and laid either money, jewels, watches, or rosaries upon it. At a fixed period the priests surrounded it, so as to prevent any one from approaching very near it, and when they thought that the attention of the spectators diminished, or that they had tired their eyes by looking stedfast for a long while at the same object, they universally exclaimed, "*The miracle is performed, the eyes are opened!*" A great part of the ignorant spectators durst not have uttered a syllable to the contrary, and those that said they had not seen the motion of the eyes or head, were soon silenced by the overawing priests, who firmly asserted that they had seen it, and one of them, in my hearing, absolutely said he would take an oath to the fact. I saw no motion of course whatsoever, nor did any one of my companions; the picture stood unconnected with any thing that could contain machinery to move the head and eyes, and was literally a painting upon canvas. What do you think of such notorious absurdity? Can that religion be pure which encourages such superstition? Does it proceed from the doctrine of the gospel of Christ, which it professes to follow? No, my dear friends, in your greatest lenity you cannot but condemn it. The grand Duke, a kind father to his people, has rendered them a more essential service in their present distress, than all

the holy pictures in his kingdom could afford them. He has sent 10,000 dollars to Sienna to relieve the immediate wants of the inhabitants, and has promised to lend farther succour in a short time. My English companion and myself propose taking a small villa, near to that of the Marchioness, being unwilling to quit the agreeable society which we have enjoyed since our arrival here, and desirous of perfecting ourselves in the pure language spoken in this neighbourhood. Should any thing very particular occur, you will hear from me by the next post, and if you do not, you may conclude that all is well. Adieu.

* FOR the advantage of those amongst my readers who may wish to become better acquainted with ancient Syracuse, and have not an opportunity of prying into all the different authors who have treated upon that city, I have subjoined the following note :

Syracuse was first built and inhabited by the Etoli, a people which migrated from Etolia, and a city called Ortygia, in the Peloponesus, a short time after the universal deluge. On this account their new colony was called Ortygia. About 4100 years after the creation of the world, according to the Mosaic calculation, and 700 years before the building of Rome, the Etoli were expelled from Ortygia by the Siculi, who in their turn were driven out by one Archias a Corinthian, who fled thither with a numerous train of his countrymen, on account of the discovery of a plot formed by them against their government. This happened about 412 years before the foundation of Rome. These Corinthians strengthened and adorned the city, and rendered it very extensive.

Strabo says, that Syracuse was twenty-two miles in circumference, and Cicero against Verres often extols the magnificence and excellence of that city. The three cities which were added to Ortygia were called Acradina, Tycha, and Neapolis, of which I will treat separately, beginning by Ortygia.

This was originally a peninsula, but the neck of land was divided by the force of the waters, and it became an island connected with the main only by a bridge. It contained a most magnificent temple dedicated to Diana, whose anniversary was celebrated with great pomp during three days, which were spent in continual banqueting and rejoicing, and according to Livy the drinking was excessive, for which the Syracusans were always notorious.

There was likewise a temple consecrated to Minerva; upon its summit was placed the shield of that goddess so brilliantly gilt, and of such enormous dimensions, that it was visible to mariners far off at sea. It was an established custom, that when a ship set sail from Syracuse, and the sailors could no longer see the shield of Minerva, they took a cup of earth, which they had collected for the purpose from the altar of the gods, beyond the walls of the city, near the temple of Jupiter Olympus, and cast it into the sea by way of sacrifice to Neptune and Minerva, and then proceeded joyfully on their voyage. According to Cicero, this temple contained a much admired painting of Agatocles in the act of fighting on horseback, and also twenty-seven tablets, upon which were drawings from life of all the tyrants of Sicily, executed in the most exquisite taste. The porticos at the entrances to the temple were adorned with ivory and gold, and carved heads of Gorgon and Medusa. In the years 1530 and 1543, several antiquities were brought to light in Ortygia, amongst which was a bust of marble with an inscription in Latin, signifying "To the Destroyer of Tyranny." I cannot devise to whom it alluded, unless it was meant to represent M. Marcellus. Another curious vestige of ancient Syracuse which was discovered, consisted in a number of quadrate hewn stones, of a large size, and in all about four thousand, which served as the foundation of the palace built by Hiero, and inhabited by the Roman prætors after the subjugation of Syracuse by M. Marcellus: upon this same spot stands the Castle of Marietto, of Saracen origin, intended to deter the Algerines from plundering the city.

It would be needless to dwell upon the fountain of Arethusa in Ortygia, already mentioned in this work, but I will proceed to the ancient Acradina, whose name is derived from

a Grecian word, signifying an elevated part of the city, according to Cicero, Diodorus, Plutarch, and Livy. This latter historian, in the fourth Book of his second Punic War, informs us, that Acradina was joined to Ortygia by a bridge, and extended northwards along the coast as far as La Scala Greca, a few miles on the road to Catania, and as we read in the 16th Book of Diodorus, it contained an immense and wonderful building, commonly called the House of Seventy Beds, built by Agathocles, king of Syracuse, which surpassed all other edifices in Sicily for magnificence and size. It was destroyed by lightning, and no traces are left of it. There were several other public buildings and temples in this part of the city, but none more striking than the temple of Jupiter Olympius, built by Hiero the younger, which was six hundred and sixty feet in circumference, and proportionate in length and height. It contained one of those three statues of the god, which were carved precisely in the same style, and were renowned in the world in those days. Another of them was taken from Macedonia by Flaminius, and conveyed to Rome, and the third was held most sacred in Pontus. The statue in Acradina was in such celebrity, that not only all Sicily, but the inhabitants of more distant parts performed pilgrimages to it. There were also temples dedicated to Juno, Æsculapius, and Bacchus: I must not omit taking notice of an orrery which existed in Acradina, exhibiting all the motions of the planets, and the operations of the heavenly bodies.

Tycha was joined to the walls of Acradina on the western side; this name signifies fortune, and was given to the city from a very ancient Temple of Fortune which it contained. It extended to the west as far as the Castle of Epipolis, a distance of about five miles from Acradina, and was entirely

surrounded by strong walls. It was supplied with fresh water by means of aqueducts, some of which were near twenty miles long, and are still existing in a very perfect state, and would perhaps to this day conduct the water, had not the Athenians, when besieging Syracuse under Alcibiades, Thrasibulus, and Nicias, destroyed their channels, to deprive the city of water, which on this account now runs into the river Anapus.

The fourth and last division of the immense Syracuse was called Neapolis, signifying a new city, as it was founded after the other three already described. It joined Acradina on the East, and lay between Tycha and the great Port. There was in it a large theatre, whose situation and size may be easily traced by the row of seats which are cut in the rock. On a stone facing the Proscenium is the Grecian word *Philistides*, whence the theatre took its name. There were several temples containing celebrated statues, and the *Latomie* of which I have treated before.

Syracuse was governed by many kings or tyrants, several of whom deserved the latter title, in the sense in which it is commonly taken. Hiero forbid his subjects to talk to one another under pain of death, they therefore invented signs, by which they made themselves understood. All ancient writers extol the unbounded riches of the Syracusans, which became an adage in other countries. They were likewise most sumptuous in their tables, and luxurious in their manners. They drank wine so copiously, that Plato and Atheneus compared them to frogs, and Aristotle de *Animalibus*, and Pliny, in the 10th Book, chapter LIV. makes mention of a drinker at Syracuse, who would continue drinking during the time that two eggs were hatched in a kind of oven or stove.

It was at Syracuse that a famous vessel was built by order of Hiero, and under the direction of Archimedes of immortal memory. The nails which united the parts of this ship were of brass, and weighed ten, and according to some authors, even fifteen pounds. They were placed so near to one another throughout the ship, that it was impossible to penetrate it with any of the instruments of destruction used in the naval engagements of that age. The hull was entirely covered with plates of lead, and the smallest crevices were filled up with pitch and tow. In the centre of the ship there were thirty chambers, each of them large enough to contain four beds. They were paved and adorned with elegant carvings in wood, representing the most interesting scenes of the Trojan war. At the stern there were three other apartments ornamented with porticoes, &c. and adjoining to these there was an extensive kitchen. Several colonades adorned the upper deck, and small gardens full of odoriferous plants, cypress, and other umbrageous trees, which grew in vases of lead or clay. There was likewise a temple dedicated to Venus, paved with agates, and other lucid stones, and wainscotted with cypress wood; the doors were of ivory, and fragrant wood, painted delightfully. There was a library which contained an orrery, similar to the one then existing at Acradina, and adjoining to it was the bath, containing three couches, and three copper boilers for heating the water. The stools were of polished stones. At the stern of this vessel was a reservoir or cistern, which would hold 2000 barrels of water, and was elegantly adorned with embossed figures: it supplied a stew stored with excellent fish. There were barracks for the soldiers both starboard and larboard, ten stables for horses with every requisite accoutrement, and all the ne-

cessary provisions; there were even blacksmiths and carpenters shops, and a mill. The pillars which supported the deck were carved to represent Atlantes, or figures of men or beasts in that attitude. Amidst all the wonders of this vessel, there are none that surprize me more than the fortifications, which consisted in strong walls and bastions, and eight watch towers, and in the center of the ship there was a most curious piece of mechanism invented by Archimedes, which cast out great stones and pieces of iron eighteen feet long, to the distance of near seven hundred feet. The tops were filled with piles of huge stones ready to be thrown down upon an enemy. The stores which were constantly kept on board, consisted in one hundred and forty thousand bushels of corn and flour, and ten thousand barrels of salted provisions.

This fine vessel, built to please the fancy of a tyrant, served a very useful purpose at last; being sent laden with corn by Hiero as a present to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, at the time of a great dearth in his dominions.

Cicero calls Syracuse the habitation of the gods, and the handsomest of cities, with whose spoils the republic of Rome was adorned for many centuries, because when taken by M. Marcellus it was plundered of all its statues and paintings, which were conveyed to Rome. Whence Livy observes, that the Romans then began to behold and admire the works of the Grecians.

Syracuse was the stage upon which the great Archimedes acted: a brief account of some of the incidents of his life may not be uninteresting to my readers. Plutarch in the Life of M. Marcellus, makes him related to Hiero Minor, one of the tyrants. He was instructed in mathematics by the best masters, but very soon surpassed them; and Livy styles him,

the only beholder of the stars and of the heavens. Cicero speaks of him under the title of a terrestrial god, a human being endowed with divine art. He invented a most curious orrery, exhibiting the motions of the sun, the moon, and the five planets; and such was his mechanical knowledge, that he destroyed with facility all the machinery, and instruments of destruction, which were used by the enemies of Syracuse in attacking the city; whence M. Marcellus gave him the title of the Sole Defender of Syracuse. He discovered a method of ascertaining the purity of metals by their specific gravity, in consequence of an application from Hiero, who wished to detect a fraud practised upon him by one of his subjects, whom he had ordered to make a crown of the purest gold, but had great reason to suspect there was a mixture of silver with the gold, which, by the assistance of Archimedes, he afterwards found to be the case.

It is not authenticated in what manner this great mathematician died, but it is generally believed that he was killed by a Roman soldier, at the time when Syracuse was taken by the troops of that nation. The soldier entered the study, and desired Archimedes to accompany him to the Roman general; the great man was so intent upon some piece of machinery, that he paid no attention to the intruder, which was construed by this proud Roman into contempt, and he immediately slew the philosopher. This is the assertion of Pliny. M. Marcellus was extremely hurt at this event, having given particular orders to spare his life previous to the subjugation of the city, and having been for several years a great admirer of his excellence. The works of Archimedes were translated into Latin by order of Pope Nicholas the Fifth.

† A STOUT Algerine cruizer might land forty or fifty men here, and plunder this castle of all its treasures in a few hours, and before any assistance could be got from the neighbouring village of Patti, full four miles distant from the Cape.

4 JY 65

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

- Page 4, line 13, for *Pesilippo*, read *Posilippo*.
Page 10, line 6, for *the Eolus*, read *Eolus*.
Page 15, line 14, for reference *b* read *c*.
Page 22, line 4, for reference *c* read *b*.
Page 26, line 16, - no note, take out the reference *d*.
Page 30, line 21, for *bandittis*, read *banditti*.
Page 31, line 2, for *Campieri*, read *Campiere*.
Page 42, line 4, for *stratas*, read *strata*.
Page 51, line 15, for *site*, read *scite*.
Page 66, line 17, for *lamps*, read *lumps*.
Page 69, line 1, for *Empedodes*, read *Empedocles*.
Page 74, line 18, to *Cata*, add *nia*.
Page 78, line 24, for *rightly*, read *highly*.
Page 81, for 21st. read 31st. October.
Page 82, line 9, for *their*, read *his*.
Page 83, line 2, for *comfort*, read *comforts*.
Page 95, line 2, leave out the word *to*.
Page 113, line 23, for reference *c* read *d*.
Page 114, line 6 and 7, for *or* read *of*.
Page 155, line 7, for *arrival; at market they &c.*
read
arrival at market; they &c.
Page 156, line 23, for *pos*, read *pus*.
Page 201, line 20, for *nymphs*, read *nymph*.
Page 204, line 7, for *dreadfull*, read *dreadful*.
Page 212, line 4, for *propose*, read *purpose*.

4 JY65

